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On Your Side

5 October 2000

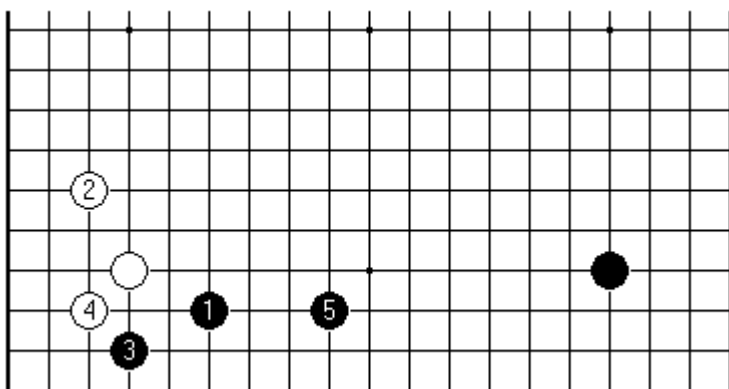
[Charles Matthews](#) 3-dan takes a sideways look at the Go openings.

Index:

1.	Framework Foundations	2
2.	Approach on the Open Side	7
3.	Anti-Framework Measures	12
4.	The Yardstick and the Wedge	17
5.	The Modern Wedge	22
6.	Adding Asymmetry	28
7.	Shimamura's Formation	34
8.	9 Dans at Play	39
9.	Introducing the Chinese Style	45
10.	Chinese: Open Side Approach	50
11.	Chinese: Lower Side Plays	55
12.	Chinese: Staying Light	61
13.	Chinese: Reduction Plays	66
14.	The Anti-Chinese Plan	71
15.	Anti-Chinese: One-Point High Pincer	76
16.	Ch'ung Am Research	82
17.	Boldly Enclosing	88
18.	Kobayashi's Formation	93
19.	Kobayashi: Distal Approach	99
20.	Takagi's Extension	104
21.	Anti-Kobayashi: Double Approach	108
22.	Anti-Kobayashi: Outside Contact	113
23.	Anti-Kobayashi: Extra Star	118
24.	Iwata's Formation	123
25.	Empty Corner and 5-3	128
26.	Empty Corner and 3-3	134

1. Framework Foundations

I want to launch this new series of articles on the opening in Go by explaining something about the study of positions on the side. It is quite uncommon to take one side as the explicit unit; usually people discuss full board openings, or the highly-developed theory of corner openings.



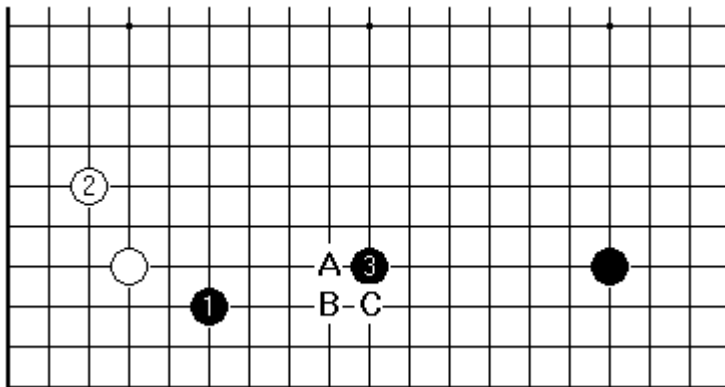
Given knowledge of only ten corner openings, several hundred side openings that combine them can be constructed. Initially this might convince anyone that it is a bit futile to aim for knowledge of side openings. There are however some very simple examples, such as this one, that occur frequently in contemporary professional play. Before dismissing their study, one should have a look at the normal tools. It has been said that corner openings sharpen one's Go, because their close study demands understanding of shape and special tactics, as well as judgements comparing territory and influence. What corresponds on the sides?

One has to marshal, not just concrete examples, but a battery of techniques, to discuss sensibly even one side at a time. Firstly there is some rather dogmatic material, which can be divided into the proper handling of extensions, and the priority to be given to plays in the corner versus plays on the side. There is the idea of balance in Go, between territory and influence, third line and fourth line plays, and generally jam today and jam tomorrow. Then there is application of the general strategic theory of Go - frameworks and weak groups, *aji* and *miai*, and so on. This is essential for progress anyway, and examples restricted to one side are simplifications (whether in a good or bad sense). Modern Go uses the 4-4 points in the corner intensively, and can hardly be understood at all without talking in these terms. In the example given Black plays very directly for a framework on the lower side; the side is still open to invasion by White, but finding how to think about that depends on developing a feeling for direction of play. Finally there are remarks based on the actual size of the 19x19 board - again these are deeply implicated in the most basic contemporary 4-4 openings.

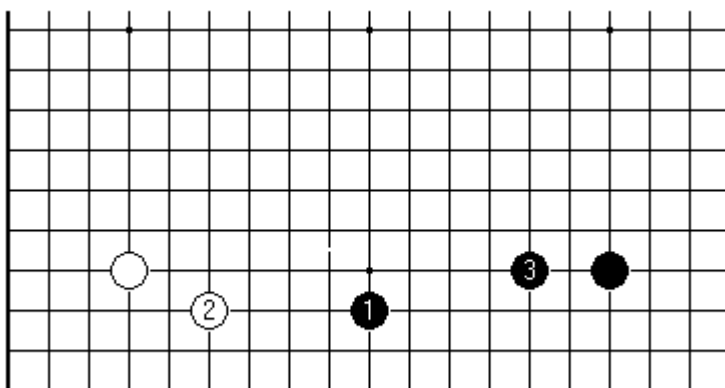
The fact is that in competent amateur play matters are often effectively settled on the sides, the corners being a matter of standard knowledge, and all-out central fighting avoided because of its genuine difficulty. In restricting to one side, one naturally

assumes first that it is the main arena deserving current attention. Of course one ultimately has to look at all four sides, and develop a whole board vision. In the examples that are given it will probably help to imagine the other corners occupied at 4-4 points, as so often in pro play, giving one or two full board openings. Just as with corner openings, there is the problem of understanding the out-turn in the overall context; but it should be less vexed, at least if one learns to question which side is most urgent, in parallel with acquiring actual patterns.

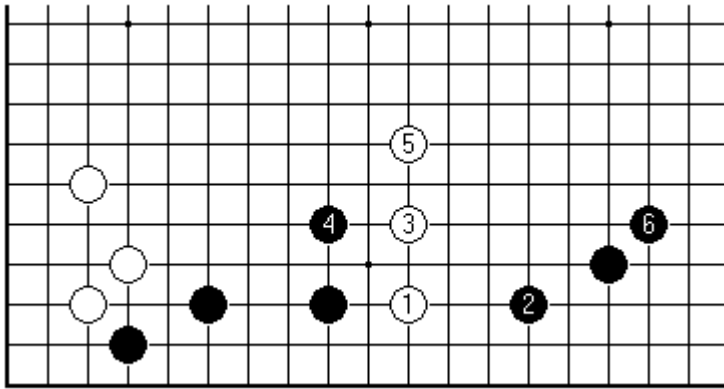
Returning then to the example given, it is one of a number of ways of playing out a side where 4-4 points face off against each other.



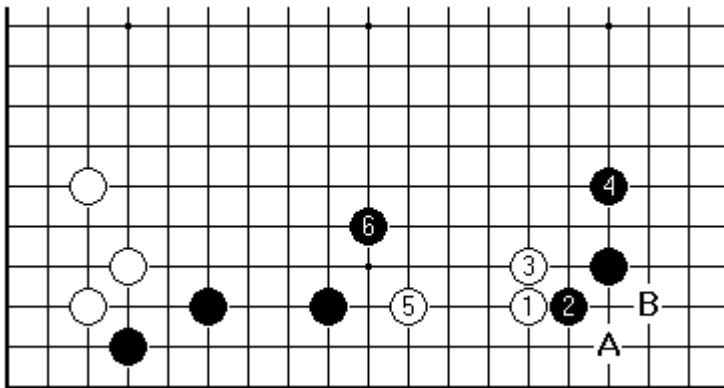
Compared with the family of positions like this one (where 3 might be also at A, B or C), Black has done the maximum possible to settle a group in the left-hand corner. The gap remaining on the side is six lines wide, rather than five.



It is certainly possible for Black to play 1 in a different style, not as an approach move in the left corner, but as an extension to 1 here. Then White 2 restricts the scale of the framework possible for Black, and Black 3 is urgent to support Black 1.

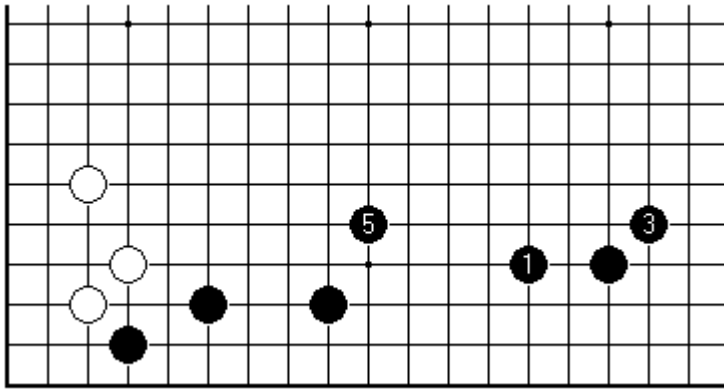


The effect of Black's choice is seen if White invades at 1 here. Black can play at 2 without feeling any concern for the left-hand part of the formation. After 5 White has a weak group still, and Black makes territory in the right corner with a clear conscience.

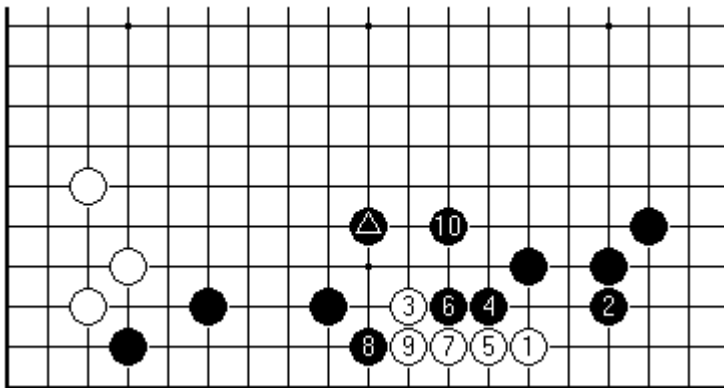


It is more interesting for White to come in with a conventional approach move. If White plays 1 Black should forbid White the slide into the corner at A, by playing 2. With 5 White tries to make a base, but now Black 6 shows how much Black gains from White's relative weakness and the lack of symmetry along this side. It may be that White hopes to gain later by invading at B, but for the present White needs to defend the existing side group. Black has made good use of first play in this part of the board.

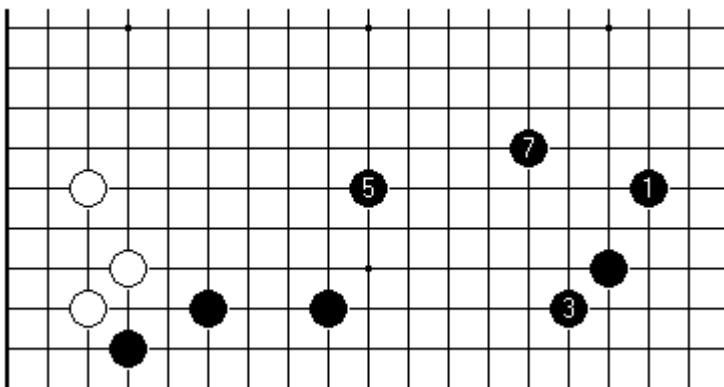
Of course, if you make a framework, you hope your opponent can't gain an advantage by invading it at once. If that isn't true - well, it sounds like the case that your opponent has some existing strength, and by invading can destroy potential territory at the same time as giving you problems with your own weak group(s). Then you should play more solidly. However the normal situation is that frameworks aren't immediately invaded. There is some middlegame theory about playing invasions "just in time", one play ahead of an ideal consolidation.



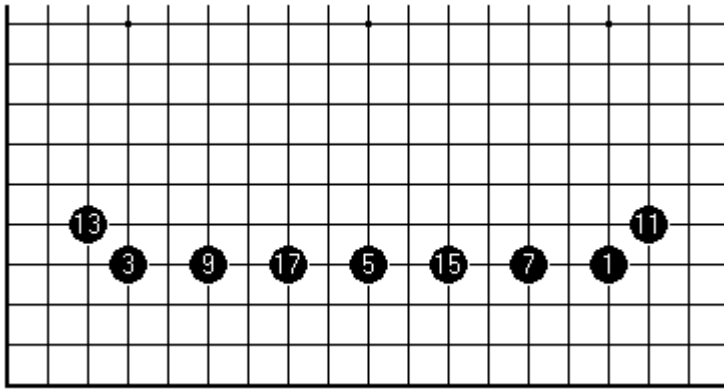
Let's look at ways in which this framework may expand towards secure territory. This is one relatively conservative plan. Black seems to have about 40 more points than White here, with four more stones.



It is probably possible to debate endlessly the security of the territory. When White invades this way Black has the luxury of good shape after 10, the marked stone having ended up on a good point.



In this case Black may take about 55 more points than White, with five more stones.

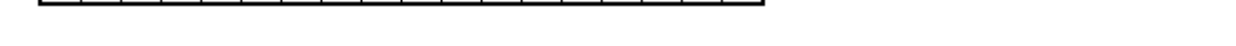


For comparison, this is a famous kind of framework, that has been turned into a 63 point side, at a cost of nine plays. Now 15 and 17 here seem to be lesser plays than those that came before, and Black also deserves something for outside influence. It is rather foolish anyway to talk of frameworks as secure territory, until you know more about the direction of middlegame fighting, which may suddenly cause an unsuccessful sequence to blossom into a serious invasion.

But surely there is enough to the counting to show the trend. Frameworks that potentially add 10 or 11 points per extra stone are ambitious. Of course the opponent will intervene at some point: framework play on a sufficiently grand scale forces the opponent's hand, and one will see attempted invasions or reduction plays.

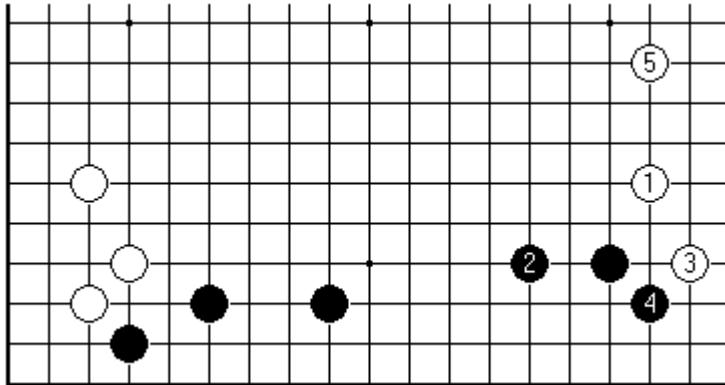
Perhaps there is a helpful analogy with Monopoly. There investing in railway stations offers a limited synergy and a strict ceiling on upgrading your assets; the real money is in laborious property development, houses and hotels offering increasing returns. In something of the same way, framework play goes beyond strictly cumulative construction of territory. Most frameworks, and just about all of those that are easy to handle, are based on initial claims along the sides of the board.

In conclusion the example under discussion seems to be a sound enough start to a framework. The group Black builds on the left is strong enough to take care of itself, as a kind of sheet anchor; and though it is rooted firmly on the third line, the framework as a whole can eventually expand into the centre.

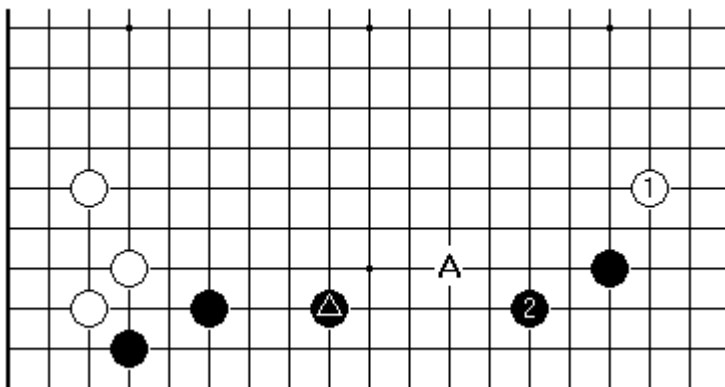


in the middle of nowhere. This is a panicky response to the thought that your opponent might possibly make some side territory.

Has White had already made a mistake? By challenging Black immediately, White seems to imply that is the case. But there is no reason to believe this.



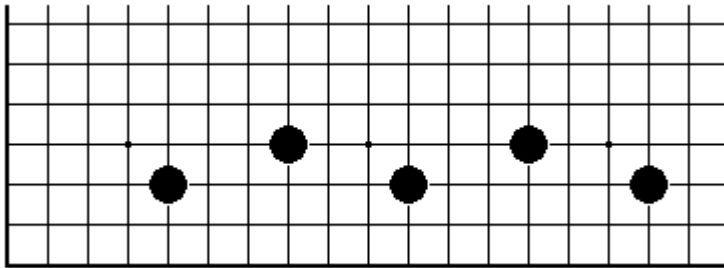
If White can get this kind of result it isn't so bad. Black's formation is quite efficient, but on the other hand it still needs one more play to become solid territory. White has influence on the left and right sides, which must be worth something in the overall position.



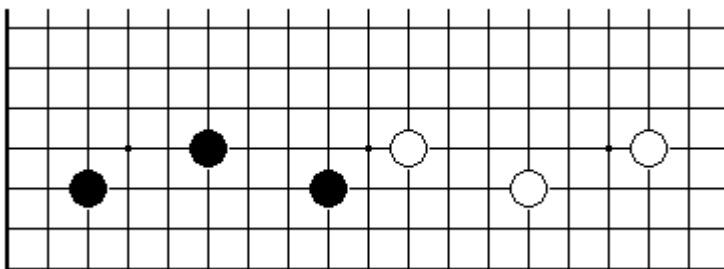
What about Black's answer? How about this way of playing Black 2? This appears to contradict one of the basic teachings about balance. However, it is in the territorial style of Ma Xiaochun, number two player in China, so beware of calling it intrinsically bad.

Since the marked black stone is on the third line, the normal idea is to play Black 2 on the fourth line, to elevate Black's position as a whole. As shown, Black might finish off the position with A, considerably later in the game, which does a kind of up-down alternation.

Let's expand on this point.

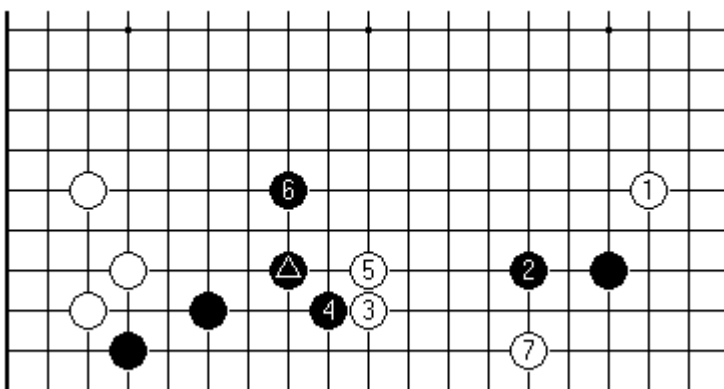


When people talk about third line/fourth line balance, they usually have in mind something like this sort of M-shaped formation. If all the black stones were on the third line, that would be unambitious in terms of territory, and also "low" (lacking in central influence). However if they were all on the fourth line, the territory would be relatively insecure.

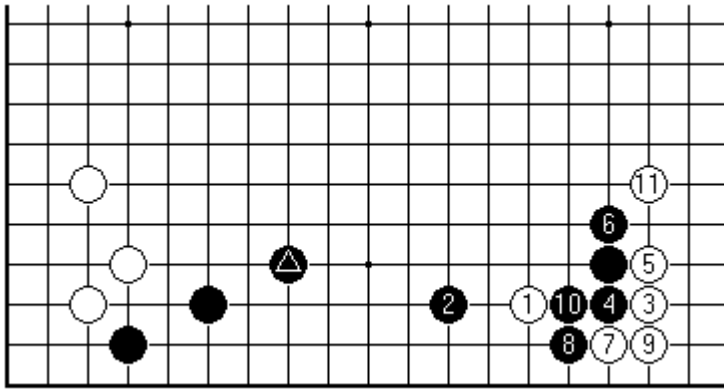


For smaller-scale formations, the inverted V or "tent" (three black stones on the left) tends to work better than the V (white stones on the right), which may suffer erosion of territory at the less well-anchored ends.

However, these basic patterns do undergo modification according to context, and don't by any means exhaust the subject. Here are a couple of further sample positions to try to clarify the balance concept.

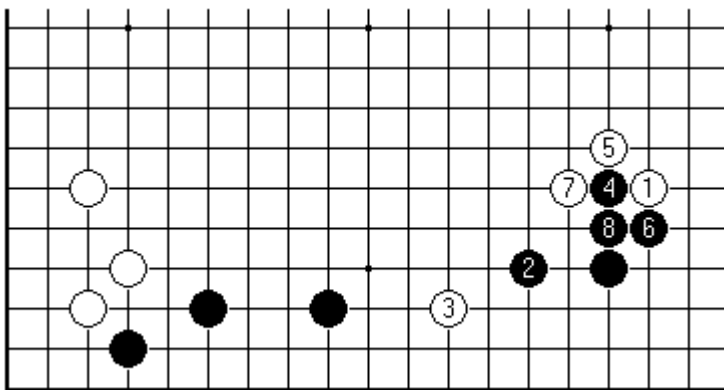


In this case Black has varied by placing the marked stone on the fourth line. Now it appears that Black 2 on the fourth line is possibly unbalanced (too loose). White can come in at 3, and up to 7 sets Black's right-hand group floating. Black 2 on the third line would be in fine attacking focus, in this case.

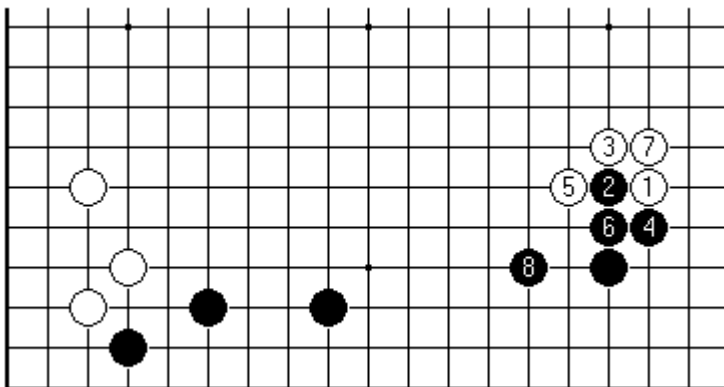


If on the other hand White approaches the corner this way, the marked black stone can end up looking better balanced than it would on the third line.

But in our case Black's left-hand formation is on the low side.

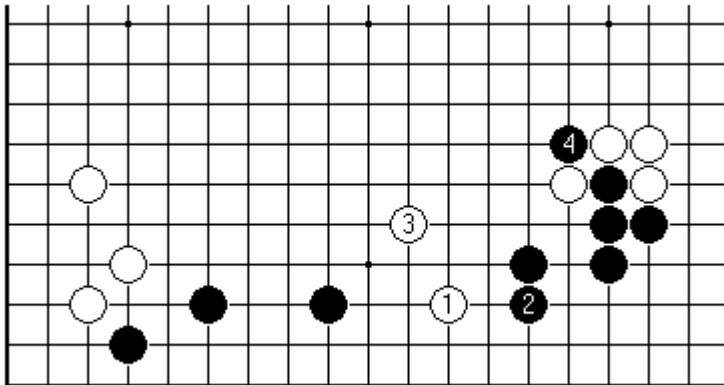


Therefore Black 2, on the fourth line, is in order. It is quite true that White could invade immediately at 3. If Black reacts passively then White may have a chance to weaken the right-hand corner. Black 4 and 6, the attach-block pattern, are a positive manoeuvre. White is going to be very busy in the near future, trying to hold things together. Neither of Black's groups should get into trouble.

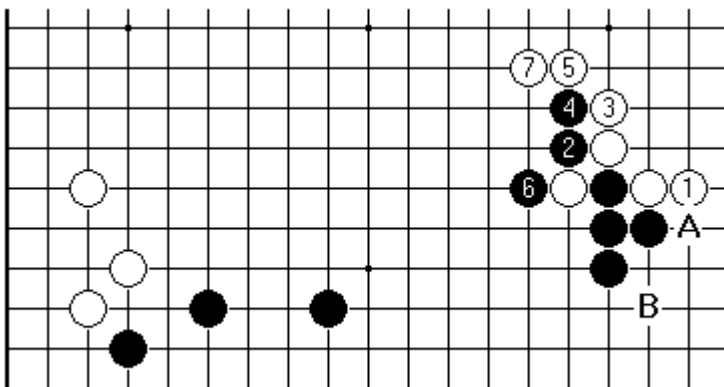


In fact it has often been seen in professional play, for Black to play attach-block immediately White approaches from the outside. There are other choices for 7; but

Black 8 is always the key point of Black's shape. This way of thinking by Black is theoretically sound, both as far as strengthening the framework on its edges goes, and for the feeling of balance along the lower side.



This sort of early fight promises Black plenty of chance to gain the initiative.



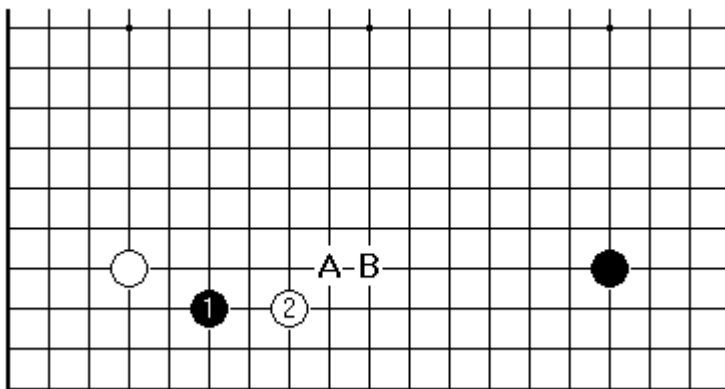
This variation developed by top Korean players shows a White effort to keep matters more fluid across the lower side. White A, Black B is White's prerogative here (Black shouldn't block directly and allow White to peep at B).

3. Anti-Framework Measures

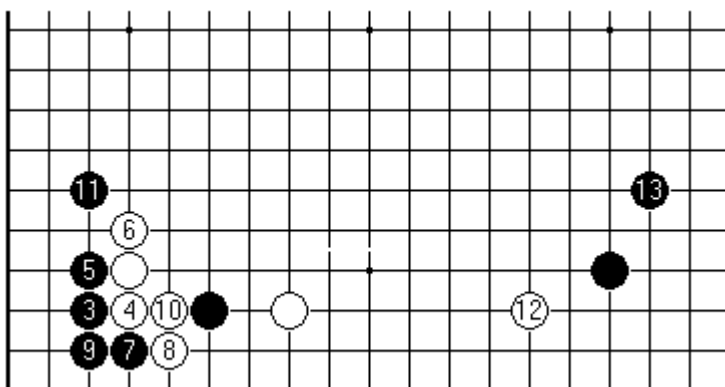
It is largely a matter of taste whether in the early stages of the game to play for territory, or for influence (expressed either as frameworks or solid positions that are hardened against future fighting, so-called thickness). Professional Go shows great respect for territory, cash in hand. One reason is that pros can defend very skilfully. Amateurs do not, which is one explanation why amateur *dan* players often systematically overestimate frameworks.

So far these articles have looked at a typical framework on the side, from the point of view of the player building it. It is quite possible for the other player to prevent this framework arising in the first place.

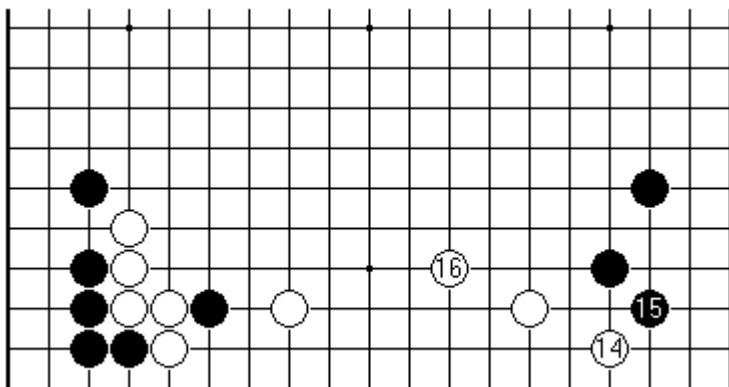
There are two different ideas that you might use for that. You can choose a different type of corner opening, applying a pincer. Pincer openings must sometimes be played, in order to develop a 4-4 point in the correct direction. Or you can treat the corner differently, leaving the opening unfinished. This is a technique that is often seen in professional play; we discuss how it relates to the *miai* concept.



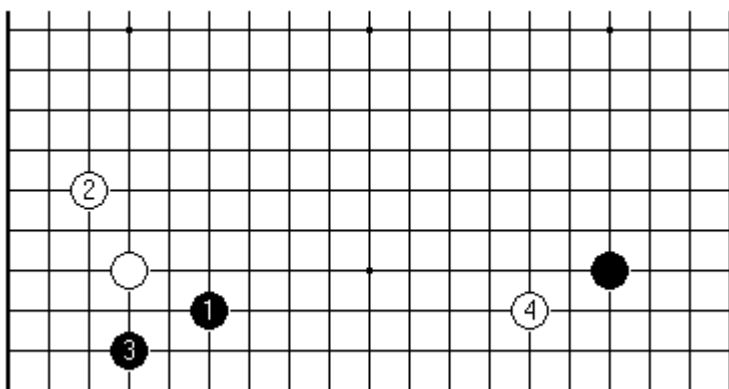
When Black approaches with 1, White 2 announces the intention of denying Black control of the lower side. Currently this pincer is popular, as are those at A and B also. In each of these cases Black has a simple way to play, invading the corner at the 3-3 point. This is in fact a peaceful plan, and leads to settled positions. Black can also choose more complex variations, by playing a second approach to the 4-4 point from the other side, or simply by jumping out with 1.



This is the standard continuation up to 11, when Black invades the corner. Evidently it is now Black who takes secure territory. At 12 White has the initiative. The whole board situation ought to be taken into account at this point. If White decides to continue on the lower side, the approach at 12 makes a framework for White. It could be somewhat unreasonable for Black to pincer now, given the strength of White's position to the left; White would probably choose a variation jumping out from 12, and the whole lower side might become a fighting area.

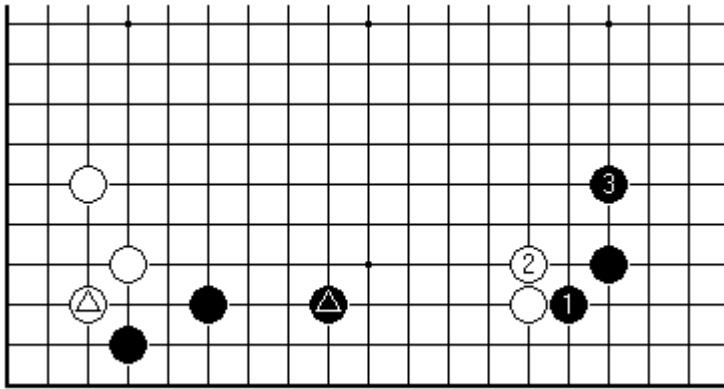


Therefore this end result may arise, White 16 taking into account balance exactly as was explained in the previous part.



The second idea comes from a considered analysis of breakaway variations (Japanese *tenuki*, literally "omitting a move"). In this case White leaves the normal progression in the left-hand corner in a state of suspense, to play 4.

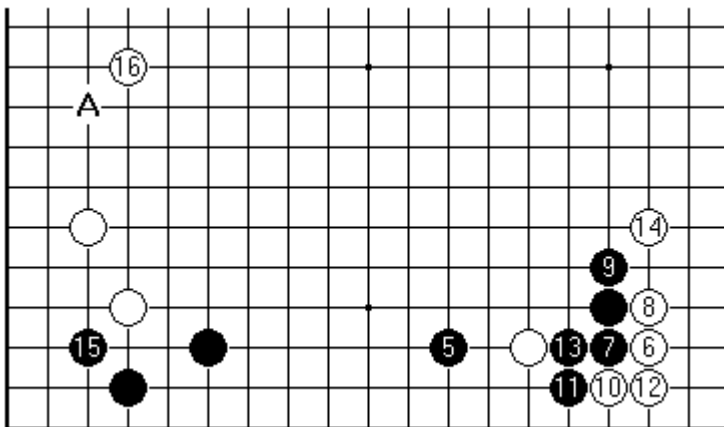
There really needs to be an adequate motivation for plays like this, above and beyond simply being "busy". The idea that one can put something over on the opponent by leaving unfinished business all round the board is a temptation that must be resisted. It seems to peak at around 1 *kyu* level. The lesson is much the same as budgetary control, on first getting a credit card. Simply deferring responsibilities and debts isn't a successful way of dealing with them.



In this case there is a clear explanation for White's behaviour. The exchange of the white marked stone for the black marked stone in this position is a minus for White. It was already seen in the first article of this series that Black is now ideally placed to attack, with 1 and 3. Therefore it occurs to White, to postpone that exchange.

This is proper reasoning, consistent with an intention on White's part to prevent Black making the lower side into a framework. If White really wishes to approach the right-hand corner on the "inside", within the potential side framework for Black, it would be better not to play out the left-hand corner first.

So much for the basic concept, showing "transmission" from one corner to the adjacent one. There remains the other issue: survivability. How much damage will White take in the left-hand corner?



In this concrete variation Black plays the pincer 5 to take the initiative and return to the left corner. It takes an effort to look at this position objectively. "Always pincer" is just as bad a guide to play as "never pincer". Look, Black has a framework once more! Yes, but White has the territory in the right-hand corner.

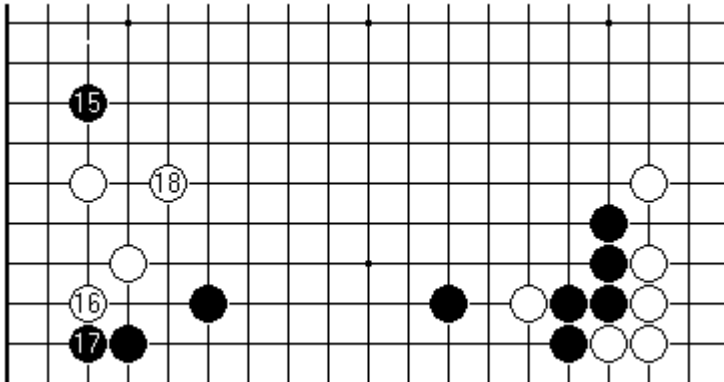
Black 15 is a very big point. It is a typical multi-purpose play:

it is worth 15 points or so in territory alone;

it removes the base from White's two stones, leaving them weak and almost without eye space;

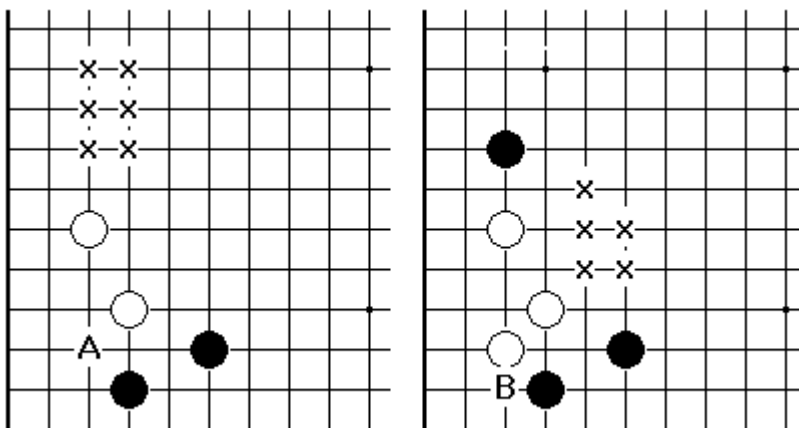
it also makes sure of eye space for Black's two stones, which in turn devalues a potential white invasion on the lower side.

White really must answer, with a play at 16 for balance, or A for a definite base on the side. Success? Well, anyway, not abject failure. White would probably want to control the top left corner already, to feel happy with this result. Black's framework seems to require two further plays to become really substantial.



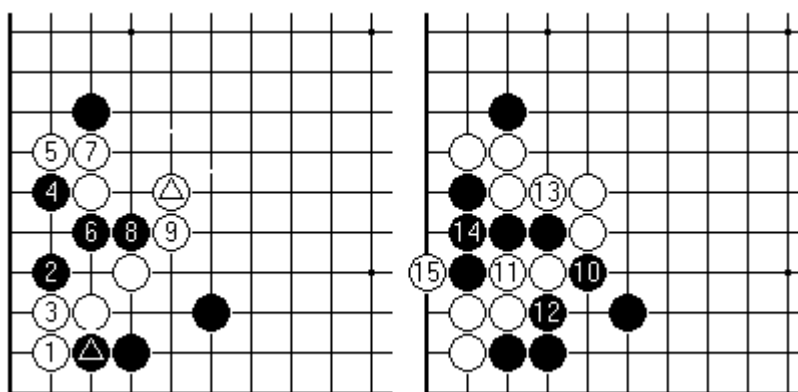
This would be Black's other idea for putting White under pressure. Black 17 is a key point but when White jumps out at 18 Black needs a play on the left side to reinforce 15, before anything else.

Does it seem that Black is thwarting White's intentions here, rather than the other way around? Actually White is showing flexibility, while Black is simply and consistently pushing ahead with a set plan. When does "lateral thinking" yield to "high-concept" Go, to steal a term from Hollywood? Normally ideas in Go do not work in their original form, but in a second phase that depends on the opponent's response; so you might say that the burden of proof is on the player who has the whole game mapped out. One thing to bear in mind: in a symmetrical position it's only the first player who can afford an inflexible plan.



The point here is really the mechanism by which White manages to shore up the defence of the left corner, once having lost the initiative on the right. The Japanese term *miai* means, roughly speaking, having a pair of good options open: "I can play this way or that way". Sometimes there is an identifiable pair of points: "if she goes there I'm going here, and *vice versa*". So one talks of a "pair of *miai*".

In this example we can indicate the *miai* concept in action at least twice. Firstly (left-hand diagram) White thinks of a play at A, and a play somewhere in the area of the 'x' points, as *miai*. If Black plays at A White extends up the left side, if Black obstructs the left side White plays A. Then, once Black has gone down the second of those roads and we have the right-hand diagram, White still has to react adequately to Black pressure. Once more point B is in *miai* relation with the whole area of 'x' points. If Black plays in the centre, White quite gratefully plays B. If Black attacks White's base with B, White must at all costs not be shut in, but must escape to the centre. Then Black has to defend the single stone on the left side, while White's group isn't so very weak.



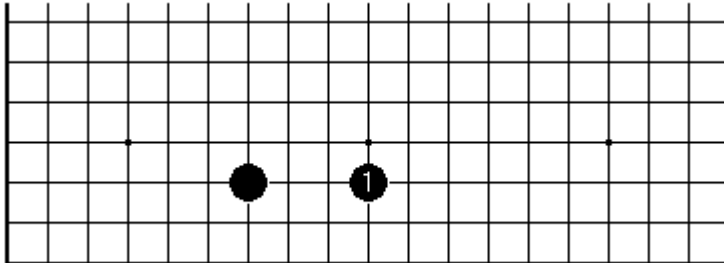
A tactical note to back up that assertion: Black 2 following White 1 is an implicit idea once Black has pushed into the corner (marked black stone). Provided White has the marked stone in the centre in place, White is just strong enough to resist 4 with 5.

As a bit of intellectual apparatus for playing Go, the *miai* concept is extremely useful. That's something often concealed by a restrictive version quoted as "points P and Q are *miai* if Black P, White Q and Black Q, White P are completely fair exchanges not giving either player advantage". This definition is what people have in mind when translating *miai* as "equivalent points". It does on occasion present itself in that fashion, for example P and Q two endgame plays each worth eight points.

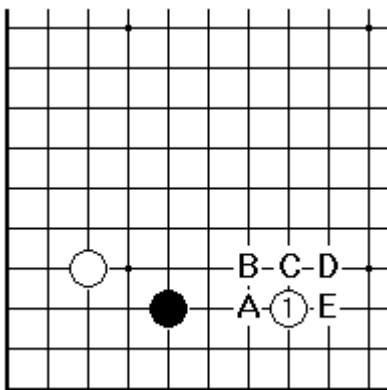
What we have been looking at here is one-sided *miai* - White's point of view only - as an explanation of defence in a position where one doesn't mind if the opponent plays first.

4. The Yardstick and the Wedge

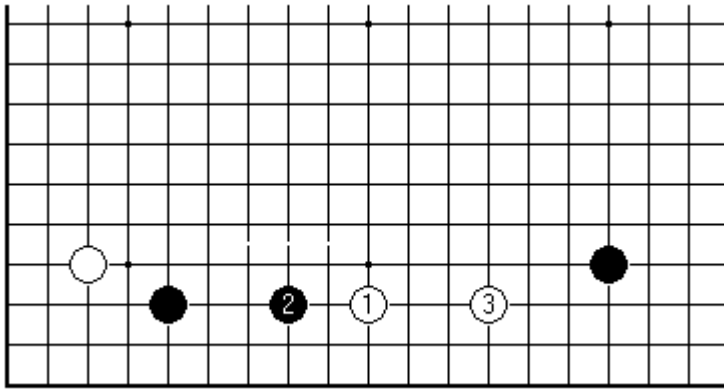
The basic unit that gives the correct feeling of scale to the sides of a Go board is the two-point extension, played on the third line.



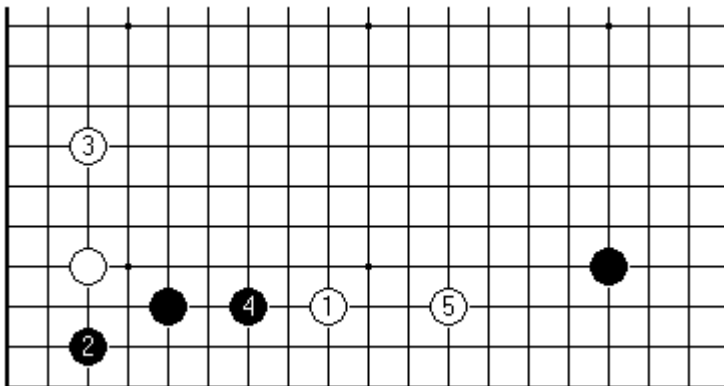
Here "two-point" refers to the two-line gap between the black stones. Extending in this way is the common way to build a group on the side that has a base (some amount of eye space). There are plenty of other standard extensions, which may involve plays on the second and fourth lines too. But the two-point extension is unrivalled for steadiness.



The first use we'll show of the use of the two-point extension as a yardstick is to clarify the pincer concept. White 1 here deprives Black of the two-point extension. It, together with any of the adjacent plays A to E, is a pincer play against the black stone. If White plays one of A to E, and Black responds anyway at 1, a local contact fight breaks out (in case of A, C and E Black is playing in contact, in cases B and D as an angle play but then White will add A to B or E to D). These fights are going to be unfavourable to Black in the opening, for reasons we'll see in a moment.

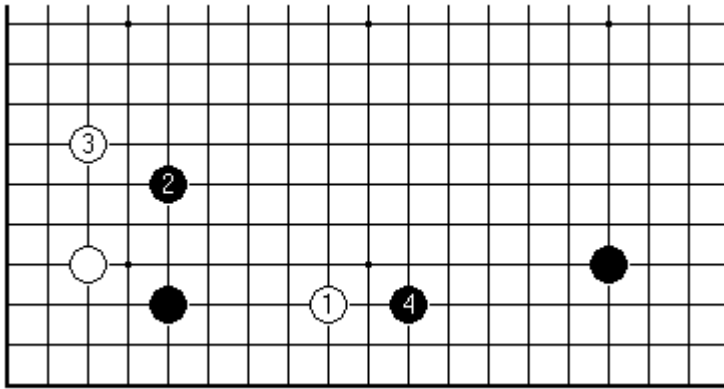


If however White puts safety first and plays White 1 as shown, four lines away from Black, that doesn't constitute a pincer. Black and White both make two-point extensions. Now Black can turn to the left side.

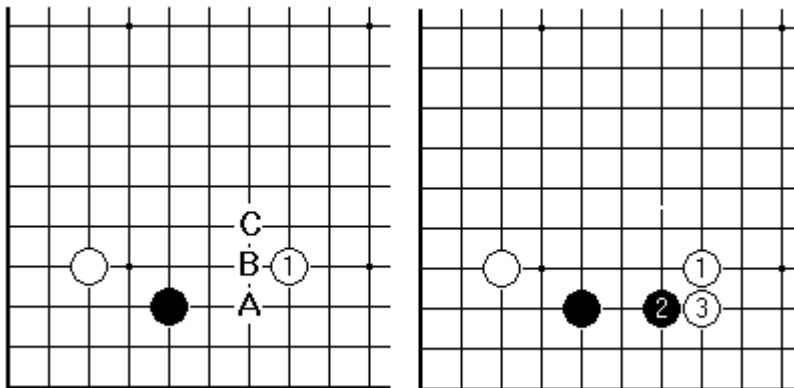


A pincer play can be considered to involve some strategic risk. What are the potential benefits? If Black plays passively White may get this kind of result. Judged in terms of territory Black's group in the left corner and the two white groups are in balance. But White has done much better when you look at overall position. For example, White's group on the lower side is well placed to impede Black's plans for the right corner 4-4 point.

It is axiomatic that **developing on both sides** is an advantage. Corner openings often lead to one player having two side groups, that aren't as stable as these; in that case the trade for the corner territory may be judged fair. But two well-established side groups will be worth more than a smallish corner.

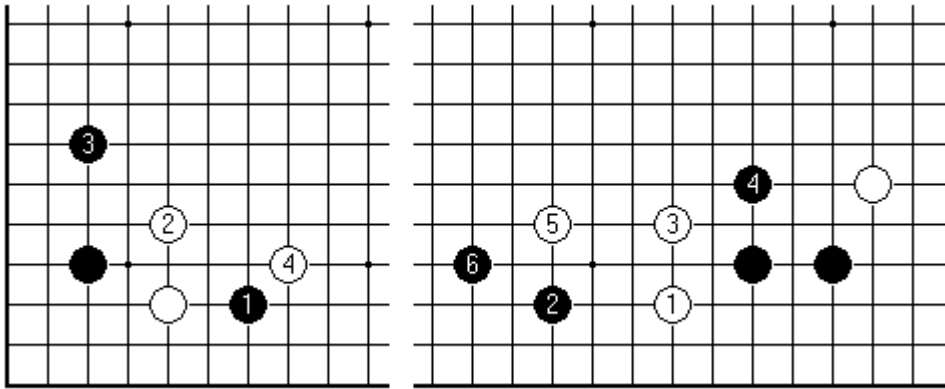


This would be the recognised way for Black to handle the side, with the white pincer becoming weak. If this result is fair, it is easy to recognise how much White gains in the previous diagram.



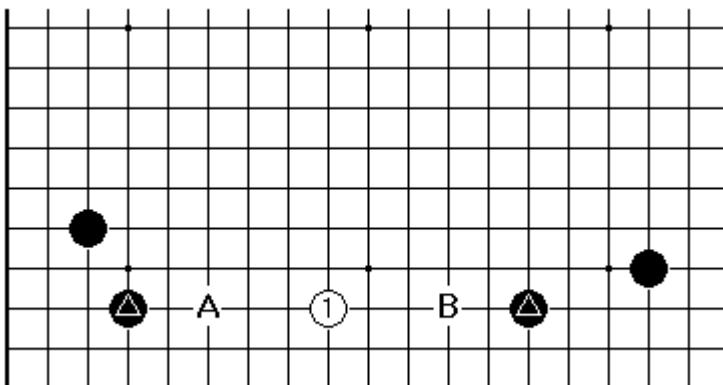
Going back now to contact fights that Black may initiate after a pincer, how about Black A, B or C? In fact Black A is bad. In line with what was just discussed, the reason can be seen this way: the pincer stone White 1 is a potential target for attack. The logic of attack and defence in Go is that contact fights are the resource of the defender, to gain some strength. Therefore the attacker should steer clear of them.

Of the other plays, Black at B is a marginal idea, researched by professionals in the 1950s. Black at C is the pick of the bunch (though it may lead to some complex variations). With it Black heads for the centre one line ahead of White. If both players push up, it should be the case that Black will have first chance to play on the left side, to attack White's corner stone.

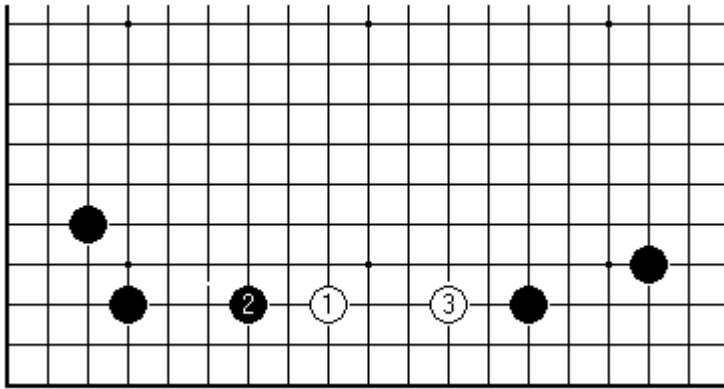


The two-point spacing also distinguishes the close pincers from the restrained ones. In the left-hand diagram Black 1 is the most forceful pincer, but after 2 and 3 the counterattack White 4 is good. The right-hand diagram shows the two-point pincer Black 2, with which Black can handle both sides in a relaxed fashion. Here the one-point pincer can lead to trouble.

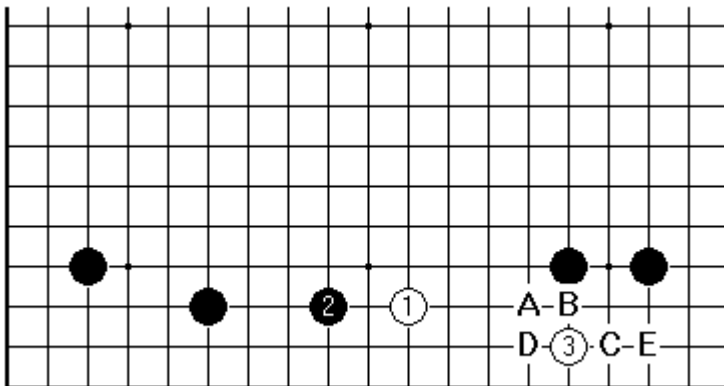
Combining the wish to develop with a two-point extension on the side, and the *miai* concept introduced in the previous article, one comes to the *wedge*.



There are nine clear lines between the marked black stones. This is the minimum spacing for a White play such as 1. White 1 counts as a wedge because it sets up the *miai* of plays next at A or B. Since Black is strong in this part of the board White can be happy simply to build a group with a base, while preventing Black's complete occupation of the side.



When Black plays 2, White 3 becomes a very urgent play. After that Black may attack White's group from various directions, but White should be able to defend without undue difficulty.

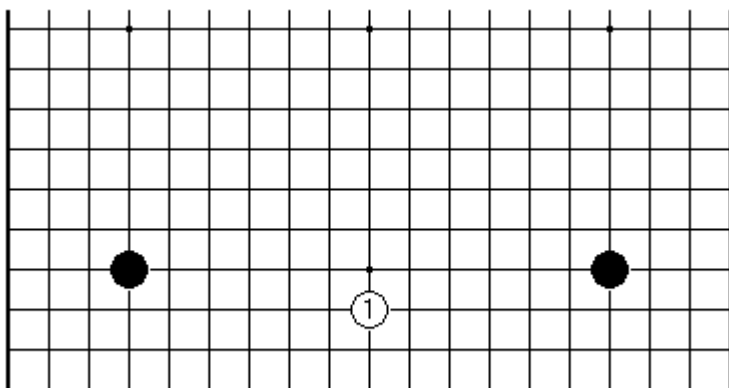


Where there are fewer than nine lines to work with, the wedge may still be possible, but as a more complex tactic. The working assumption is that contact fights are best avoided, if possible. In this case there are eight free lines. White 1 sets up *miai* of a two-point extension to the left, and the slide to 3. There are now a number of ways Black could try to take advantage, since White's position is "thin", a trifle over-stretched. White with skilful play ought to be able to weather the storm. Another possible sequence replaces 3 by the angle play at A. After Black B, White 3, Black C it would be time for White to jump out from 1 into the centre. Later White would take interest in connecting at D, to stabilise the group, and leave interesting potential for a follow-up at E.

When there are ten or more free lines, you have the luxury of choosing between more than one possible wedge play in that space. The wedge is an essential tool to deal with broad frameworks, in playing on the sides.

5. The Modern Wedge

With the ever-greater use of 4-4 points in the opening, it is a most natural question "how do you play against two on a side?" The Two Stars (Japanese *nirensai*) formation with 4-4 points in adjacent corners has, since the 1980s, become popular with White as well as Black.



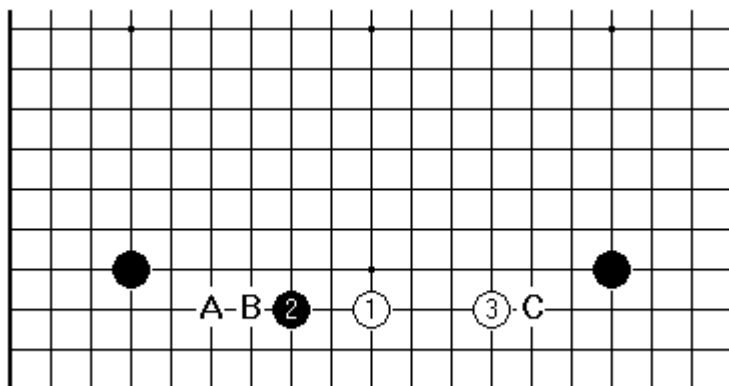
The wedge play by White, symmetrically placed between the corners, is a fundamental idea. (There are other possible wedges one to the left and right, in line with what was said in the previous article, the separation between the black stones being eleven lines.) Despite this having been a common play for at least 65 years in professional Go, the resulting variations are by no means all worked out, and just a taster can be given here.

It isn't necessarily wrong for White to approach either corner instead, but there is plenty to be learned from this, the **modern wedge** as we shall style it. In fact from a strategic point of view this is a most deceptive situation.

As everyone should know, the 4-4 point can be invaded at the 3-3 point - but if White does this prematurely Black will build early influence for a good result along the side. The wedge play 1 guarantees White a group on the side with a base, which would be well placed to neutralise that Black influence if White later got round to either 3-3 invasion. So far, so good.

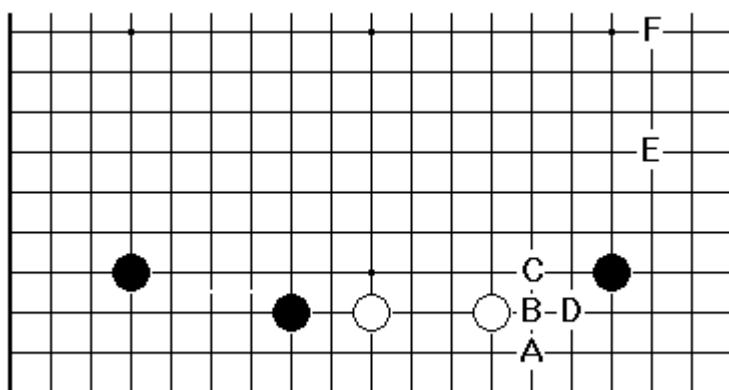
The potential of the two 3-3 invasions will then hang around in the game for a while. How long? There's the rub. We get here a sniff of the Japanese concept of *aji*. Literally "taste" or possibly "smell", think "aftertaste" as in "lingering", or "air freshener" as in "old cigarette smoke in your curtains". Because we start in a symmetrical position you may think you can get away with the restricted version of the *aji* concept explained as "thinking of the two 3-3 invasions as *miai*". That is, White reasons that Black can't defend both corners with a single play, so says, "no hurry, I get established on the side, you defend one, I invade the other". The problem is that, as soon as we get further action on this side, it becomes considerably harder to see this as a real mechanism. So, it's a half-truth, part of the picture with *aji*. The full-blown *aji* concept takes quite some digestion. (To give it in summary, you need to take on board two main points: (a) *aji* relates not just to potential to invade or live, but for example potential to cut, or any other tactical element such as breaking a ladder

or making a *ko* threat; and (b) in high-flown language, *aji* is part of modality-handling, namely a prospectus of possibilities, and by the nature of Go is the major partner, forcing plays (*kikashi* in Japanese), or prospectus of necessities, being normally auxiliary. Well, you did ask.)

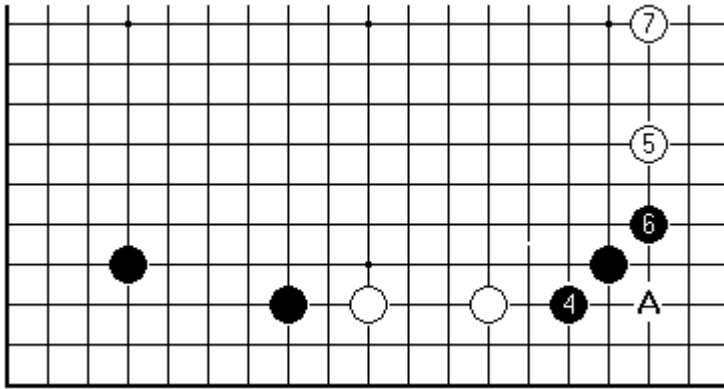


Next, what? - we clearly need some concrete variations to get our teeth into after that excursion into blue-sky theorising. Something like this diagram, supposing Black plays here first (the urgency of first play here will be less than for some other typical opening plays). Black pushes from a chosen side with 2 (maybe B, conceivably A) and White extends to 3 (traditional) or C (modernistic).

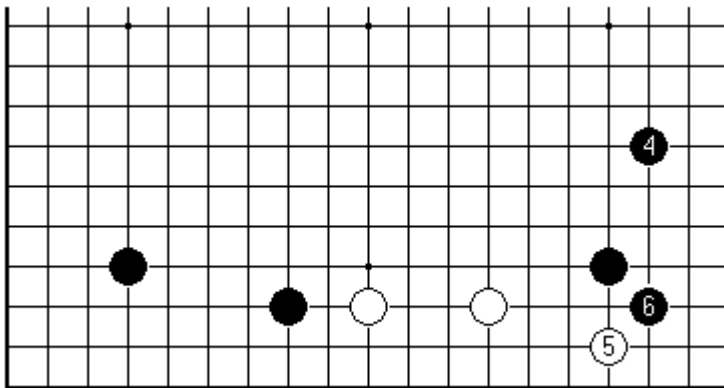
Black's choice amongst A, B or 2 requires the taking of a view. While A defends the corner best (now the usual invasion at 3-3 for White expects a *ko* only for life), anyone can see that is at a cost of less pressure on White 1. Play B strikes a balance, and 2 has the most punch, while regarding the left-hand corner *aji* as secondary for the moment. Well, Black also wants to do something to shore up the other corner, so turning the screws on White may manage that in an "attack the best form of defence" way.



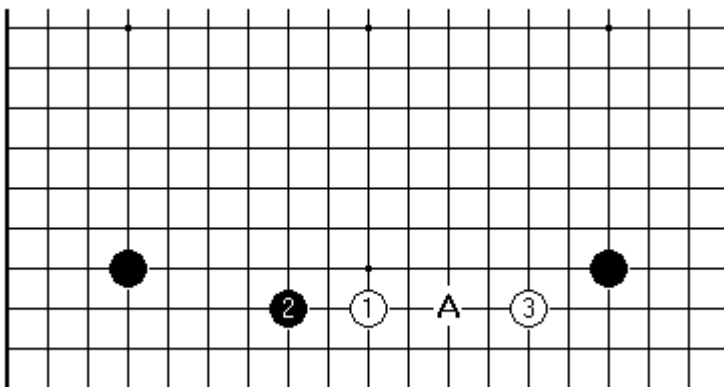
If we get therefore to this position, Black might continue with any of A to F. Of these A, B and C try directly for corner territory; White will get settled and look towards the open left-hand corner. Black D and E are the main line choices, and the provocative F was seen a while ago in pro games (if White invades at or near E, Black C is a good fighting shape).



This is the old main variation. There is corner *aji* left at A, still; so there was dissatisfaction in the ranks (not, I think, that you could get all 9 *dans* to agree; Fujisawa Shuko seems to like 4).

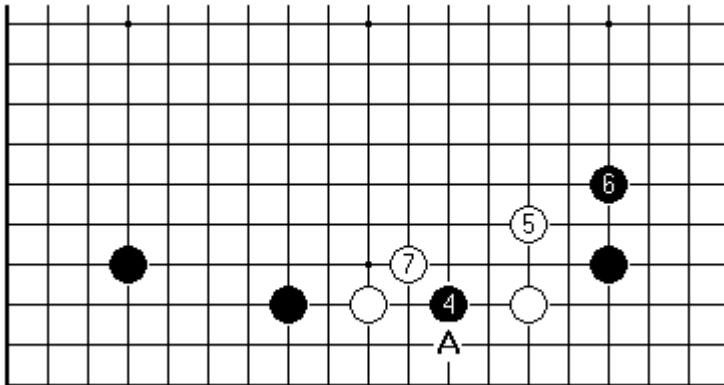


So now Cho Hun-hyun, the brilliantly lucid Korean number 2 (displaced only by his pupil Lee Chang-ho), comes down in favour of 4 played this way. If 5 and 6 happen Black has efficient shape (and White can still be invaded on the lower side at some stage). Black has too the option of playing elsewhere with 6, in line with Cho's rapidly developing style.

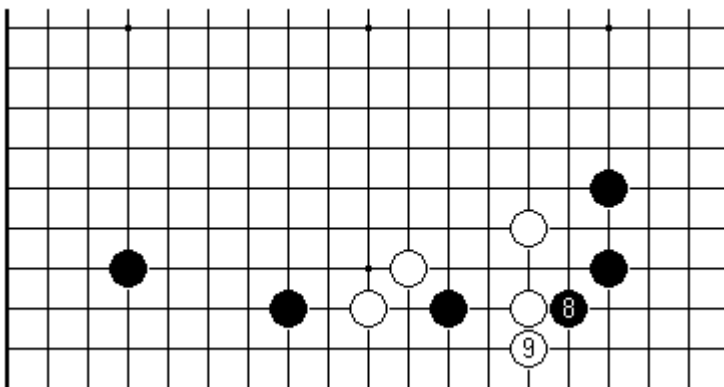


The other way to play, stretching the white extension to 3, has become the standard idea in recent years. What White is doing here is creating further *aji* in the position, namely allowing Black to invade at A. What with two open corners already, this is a

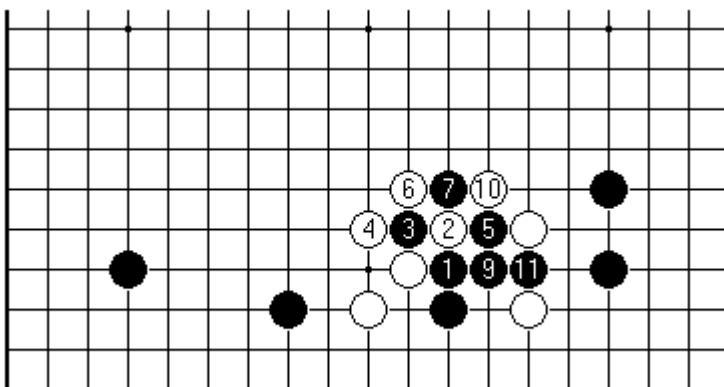
dynamic situation and you shouldn't be surprised that the variations aren't completely explored.



Nowadays this sort of thing is the most frequent development. Black accepts the challenge and plunges in at 4 immediately. White surrounds Black with 5 and 7. The major branch would be White 5 at A, which is a sacrificial tactic to get White connected either along the second or fourth line, leading to acceptable results.

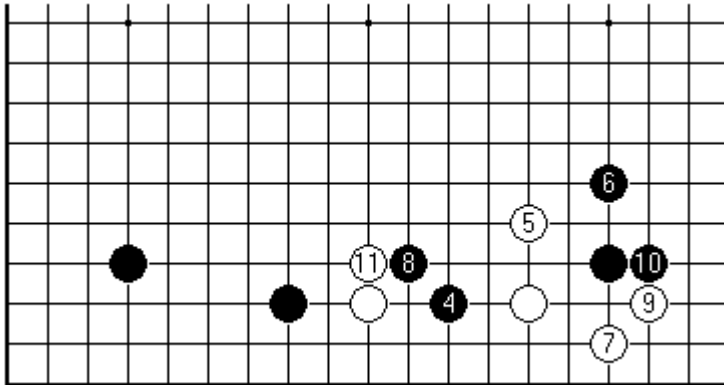


Black now could force with 8, doing quite a lot for corner safety but not completely cleaning up the problem.

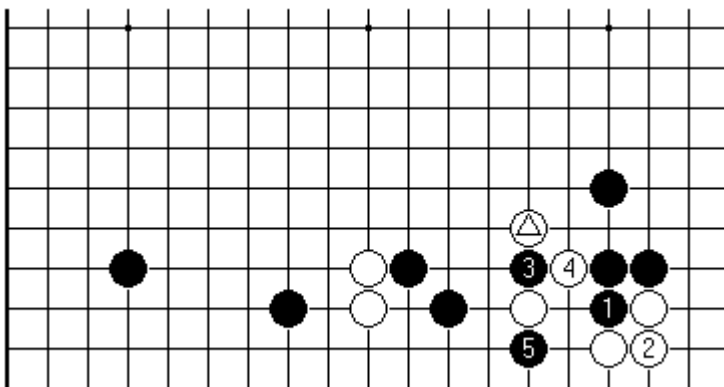


A reason for Black to hesitate before doing that is the fact that the single black stone isn't really dead yet. Yes, you guessed, it has *aji*. If you don't respect your own good

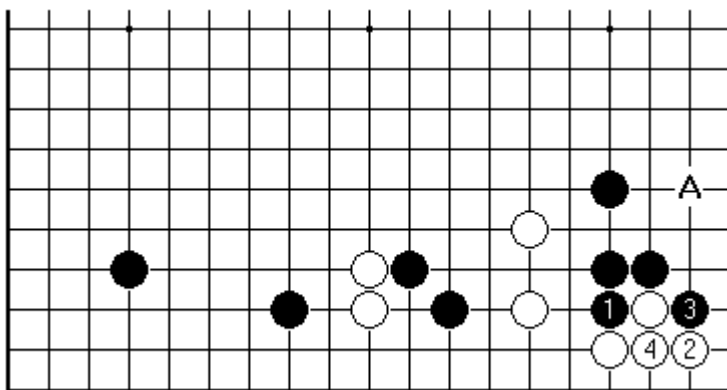
aji - lurking possibilities - you are going to botch many positions. There is this *ko*-related sequence (White 8 at 3 assumes White backs down from cutting and fighting the *ko*). And doubtless plenty more where that came from. Black has to bear this all in mind before doing anything round the edges of White's position.



If White tries to get the jump on Black by putting in 7 as a slide into the corner, that opens a whole new can of worms. There is no real reason for Black to submit with 8 at the 3-3 point 9. Therefore there are fighting variations, set off by what is effectively cheek on White's part. As shown here White has some corner profit, and the other white group will move out into the centre in parallel with Black 4 and 8.



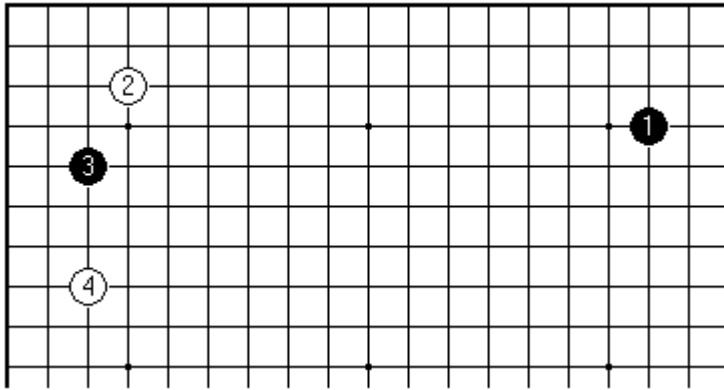
I'd like to finish by pointing out one of many things that goes on in this sort of position. As a trade-off for allowing White the 3-3 point in the right corner, there is the shape feeling that the marked white stone is misplaced. This becomes visible once Black has played 1 for 2. There is a quite well masked combination cut with 3 and 5, which has to be taken into account in the later fighting. So, an extra piece of *aji*.



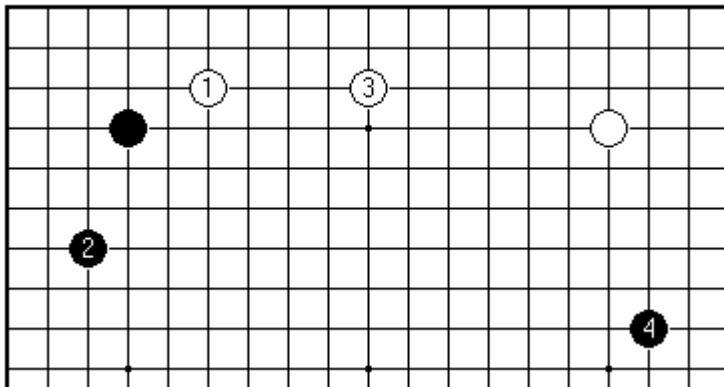
Should therefore White plan to answer Black 1 with 2 as here instead? That would leave the corner with more eye shape, assuming the worst came to the worst and it was cut off later. Well, tell me whether the *aji* of a White play at A later is a big deal, and I'll try to give you a straight answer ... after Black 3 is exchanged for White 4 this is a less serious invasion point. The forcing play 3 interacts with the *aji* on the right side. And yes, if you don't find this complex you don't understand what's going on.

6. Adding Asymmetry

If you're interested in historic Go, you'll notice that the early Japanese games from the classic period initiated by Honinbo Sansa (strong also at shogi) bear no resemblance to anything discussed so far.



For example, in this game from 1669 the first two corners are occupied at 3-4/4-3 points. This style continued in use for three centuries.



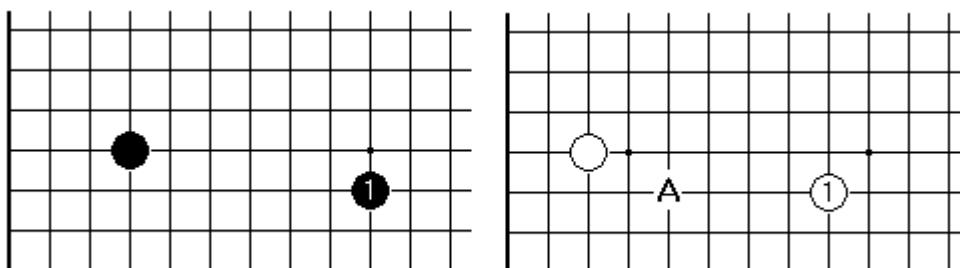
This game from China, played in the same decade, starts with 4-4 points in place. That was the custom in China until around the beginning of the 20th century. The game started with diagonally-opposite corners occupied by a pair of Black resp. White stones, so that every side had the initial formation considered in part 1 of this series. The opening plays (yes, White started) seen here aren't something we've considered, but the basic narrative, White lays out a framework, Black limits it, should sound familiar.

There is no right or wrong to be discussed here, but issues of taste certainly enter. Japanese Go cut the umbilical cord from the Chinese tradition around the period (early 17th century) when the country was closed to the outside world by the Tokugawa shoguns. The Japanese masters, organised into four major "houses" or competing academies with state support, played superbly controlled Go starting with an empty board; while the Chinese players saw no reason to vary their initial set-up that led invariably to sharp games.

One can speculate endlessly on national characteristics, but perhaps poetry can make the point. The well-known *haiku* form has irregular lines of length 5/7/5 counted by syllable; Chinese classical poetic forms show up as rectangles on the page, with lines of equal length and one character per syllable. Japanese taste is said to run to the asymmetric. What is perhaps less well known is the origin of the *haiku* form as the opening three lines of the *renga* or team poem, with further blocks 7/7 and 5/7/5 contributed by a group of poets sitting in a circle. Each successive five-line block was to make up a poem complete in its own terms, until a fixed number, say 100, had been completed. The initial *haiku* sets the scene, though the whole *renga* doesn't make narrative sense if you read it though. (A bit like TV soap operas that add up only when taken a small portion at a time.)

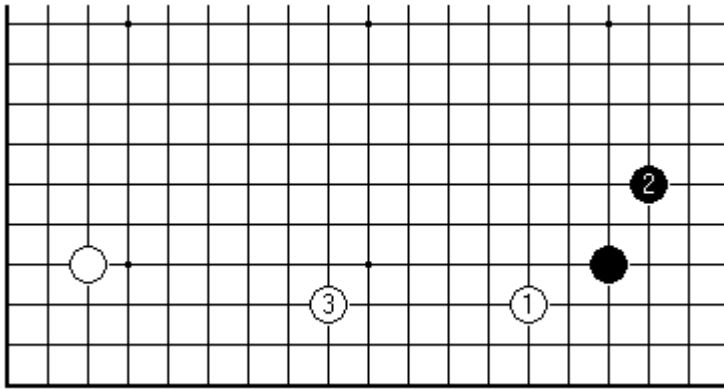
Can one equate Go openings with poetic seedings? Isn't Go a competitive activity? The answer to that is surely: and you think poetry isn't? You can't have been reading your Harold Bloom. The other answer is that Go masters are taken to be artists as well as sportsmen. Your plays can "cap" the opponent's in Go, without the need to sweep them aside.

Be all that as it may, the Japanese are fiercely appreciative of their innovation of 3-4 point opening plays, adding asymmetry and freedom to the game. (Old Chinese Go curiously had empty corners in three-stone handicap games, with the handicap stones set up at two diagonally-opposite 4-4 points plus the 10-10 point.) From our point of view the addition of the asymmetric 3-4 points makes for a four-fold increase in the number of basic side patterns, to a realistic repertoire.

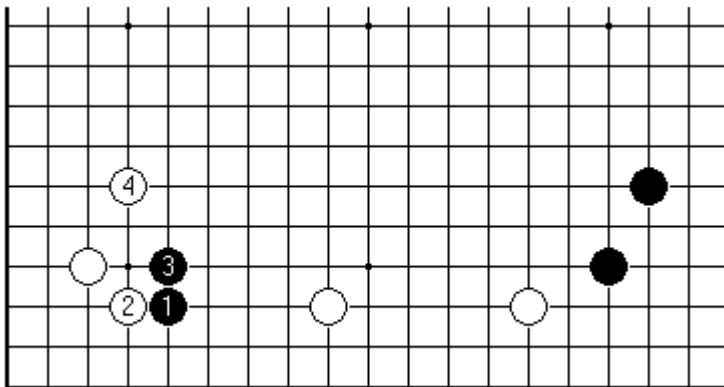


Let's get immediately to discussion of how the 3-4 point differs from the 4-4, in relation to extensions along the side. The extension Black 1 of five lines, from the 4-4 point to the middle of the side, is a routine play, just as likely to be used as plays closer to the corner. On the other hand the extension White 1, of the same length, was traditionally considered inferior to the corner enclosure at A. The basic teaching is "corner before side".

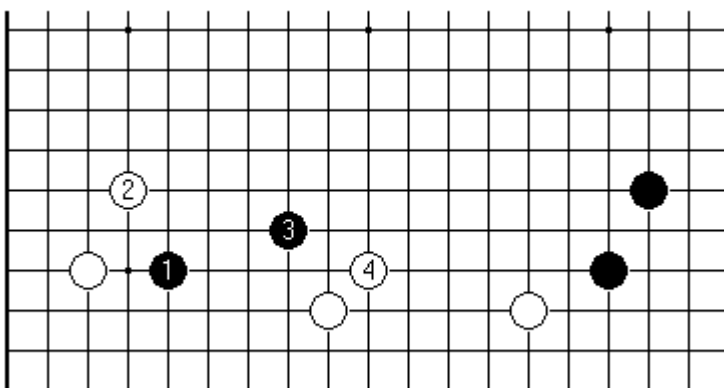
If you had to choose one of the dogmatic principles of Go that has been undermined by developments in the modern game, this would be it. If White doesn't play A Black may. Black, however, is then playing into a ready-made pincer set up by White 1. White may be able to take advantage - this is not so different from the situation in which White decides to approach Black's 4-4 point in the left-hand diagram "from the inside". The working assumption is that these frameworks cannot simply be negated.



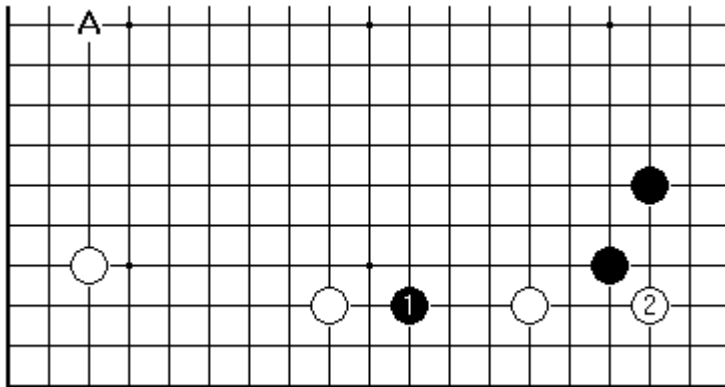
By way of concrete example we can give this, the so-called mini-Chinese formation. White 1 and 3 treat the side as a whole, making a large if loose framework. White 3 makes nice balance on the side. The mini-Chinese has been high fashion in top level Go for a couple of years now. It may seem perverse to introduce it before the Chinese style, of which it is a cut-down version, and which figured so prominently in Go in the 1970s. However there will be time enough to get onto that, and anyway the historical warrant for the mini-Chinese is impeccable, played as it was by Dosaku. It has been around for a long time as a strategy for White in a two-stone handicap game.



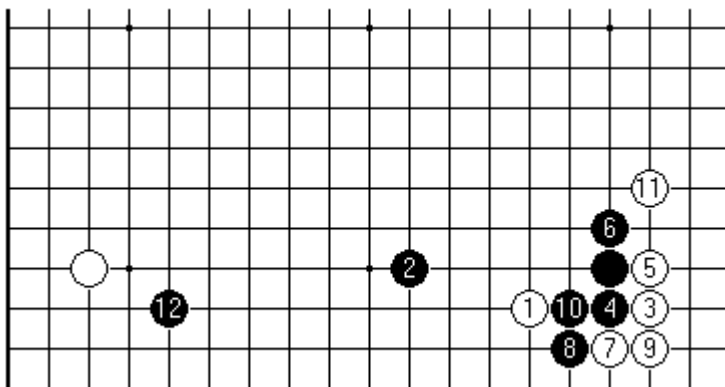
To deal with the basics of the mini-Chinese, Black's approach at 1 here isn't so good. White will make territory on the left while attacking, after 4.



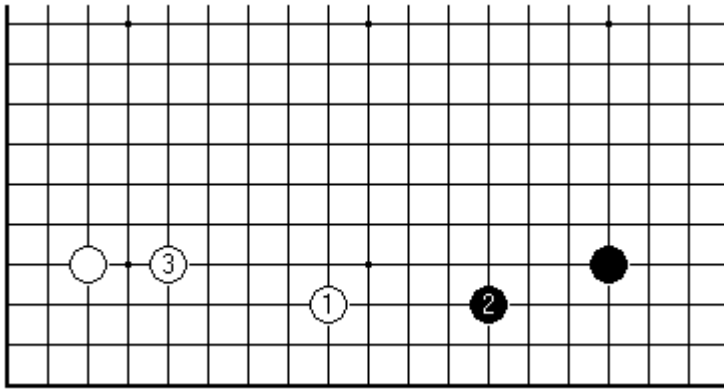
It is better for Black to come in one line higher. In the next article in this series we'll look more closely at the choice of approach move in comparable situations. White 2, 3 and 4 are appropriate shapes in this formation. Black retains some options at the 3-3 point in the left-hand corner.



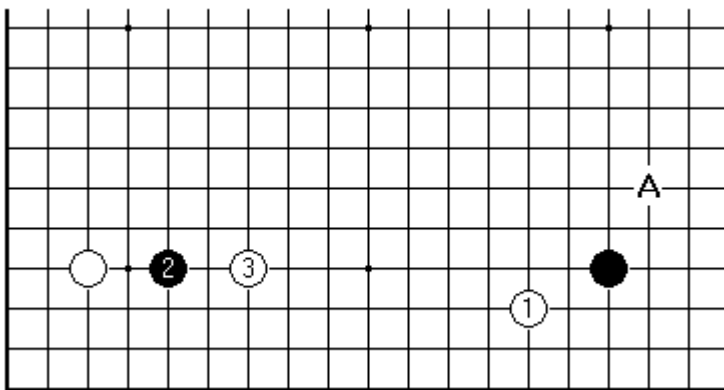
If Black invades like this in the "outer" sector of White's framework, White has an easy way to cope by invading the corner with 2. In current practice, assuming White occupies the top left corner, Black's common idea is first of all to wedge on the side with A.



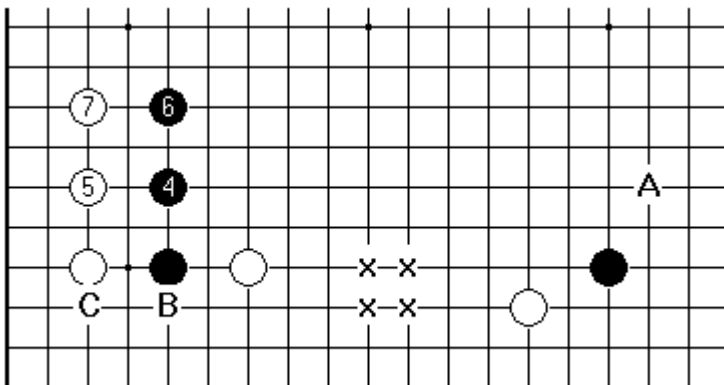
Naturally enough the success of the mini-Chinese conception has led to counter-strategies. This pincer Black 2 is one idea, after which Black takes over the side as a framework. While White 3 is the first thought, White may also look at a double approach (White 3 at 11).



To avoid that development, White can play 1 this way. The trouble is that then Black 2 becomes good. White 3 can be seen as necessary to prevent the isolation of White 1. However Black is then left with the initiative. White has a good formation, but no grand strategy.



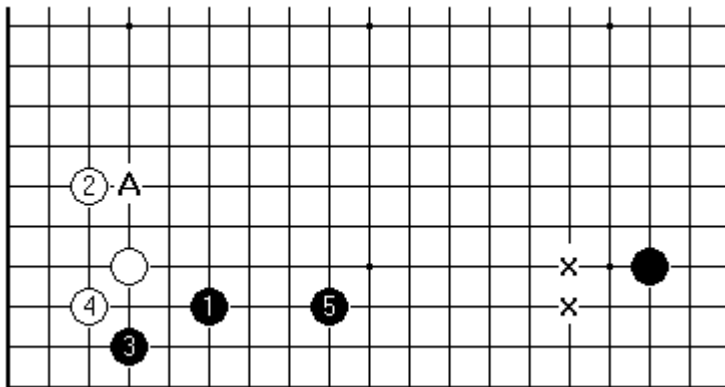
To close with, a slice of typical contemporary Go. Suppose Black 2 is played immediately as an approach in the left-hand corner (this is most likely to happen with colours reversed, as a combative plan for White). That point was a key position in the mini-Chinese, so, applying reasoning introduced in an earlier article, Black may play there before tackling the right-hand corner. Now White gets a chance to play a double approach at A. Despite a very long history, the jury is still out on double approach variations to the 4-4 point. In amateur Go White might expect to gain advantage that way, considering the right-hand corner alone.



White 3 as shown, on the other hand, looks at the side as whole. It is a close pincer, favoured by the great Otake Hideo 9 *dan*. This isn't chaotic fighting at all (yet): White is leaving the right-hand corner unsettled for the moment, but you can read that as flexibility. The pincer in question isn't well covered in *joseki* books, but professional practice makes 4 to 7 the most likely continuation. White now has territory on the left. To compensate Black will think of attacking on the side at a point such as one of those marked 'x'. White has plenty of resources in such a fight. White B is a big play aiming at expanding the corner, using the erstwhile pincer stone as a sacrifice. Black often puts in the play at C first to forestall it. White can respond to a pincer counter-attack by playing at A for good overall position, as well as by dodging into the corner at the 3-3 point to take further territory. Black's problem will be to consolidate a framework on the side with much remaining potential (*aji*, to use the term introduced last time) in White's stones.

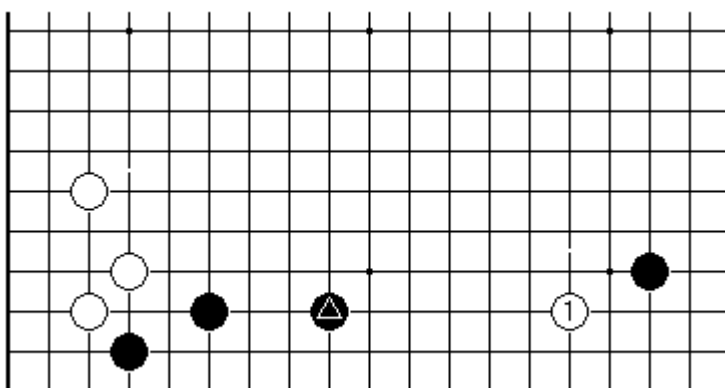
7. Shimamura's Formation

There is a formation on the side that is very natural for us to look at next. It is a close cousin of the mini-Chinese introduced in the previous article, and close in spirit also to the initial position from the first article of the series, where we came in as it were. It doesn't share the glamour currently attached to the mini-Chinese, but has been handled by top pros, and has the great virtue for the purpose of instruction that there is one thing about it that every player should know.



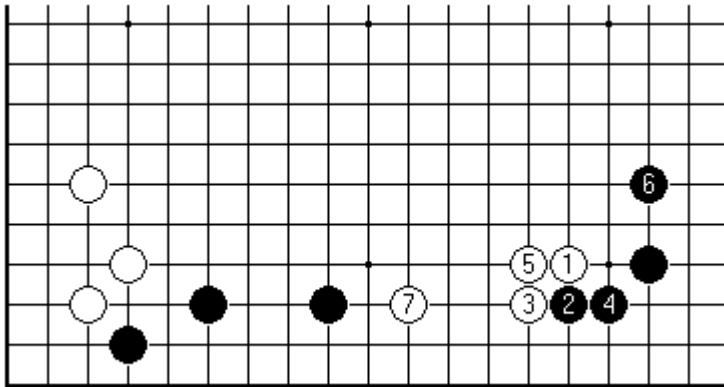
This is the formation (in which 2 might be at A instead) that seems to have been introduced into top-level play by Shimamura Toshihiro (1912-1991) 9 *dan* in 1978. In any case he was an early adopter of this pattern, as of the Chinese style. A Nihon Ki-in stalwart, at his peak from 1955 to 1960, and who won 15 titles, he should be remembered for something in these forgetful days. His nickname was "tarnished silver" because of his low-key style of play. I suspect that in the era of consumer electronics it might have been "brushed aluminium" for unobtrusiveness.

If White does nothing here Black will soon enough enclose the right-hand corner with another play, probably on the fourth line for balance. The question that concerns us is how White might approach the right-hand corner at one of the 'x' points. Which is better?

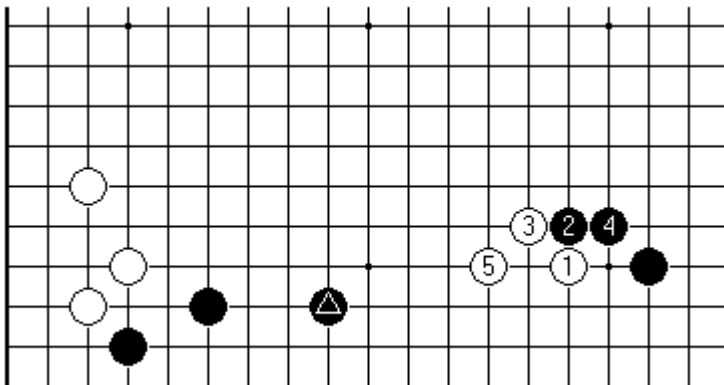


If you judge by professional games, White always approaches on the third line as here. The approach one line higher isn't seen. When such a clear-cut rule appears to hold, it is definitely worth following up. It is quite rare to have a guideline of this sort,

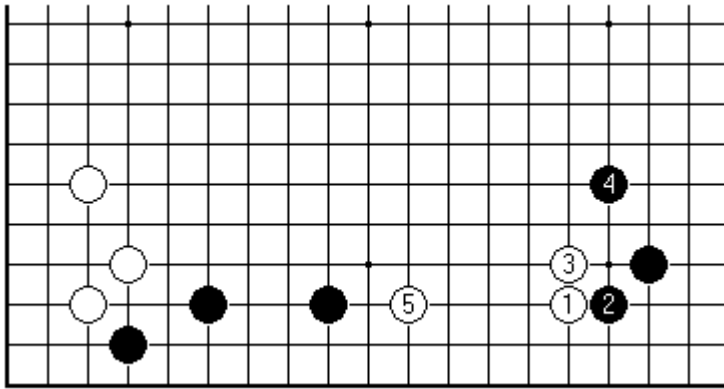
especially one that is close to being of pure "yardstick" type - depends mostly on the seven-line separation between the marked stone and the right-hand corner.



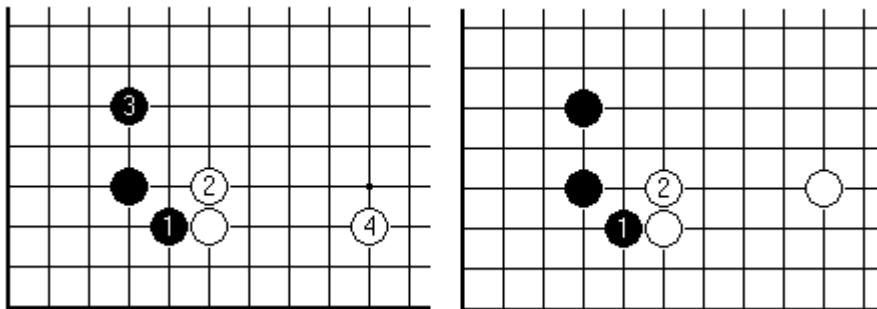
One convincing variation is this, where Black responds to the high approach with the most common opening procedure 2, 4 and 6. Then White 7 is an under-powered extension. According to a Go proverb that we'll give a thorough outing in a moment, White should extend one line further than that. Black's stones on the side are ideally placed in that sense: White's correct extension would be a contact play.



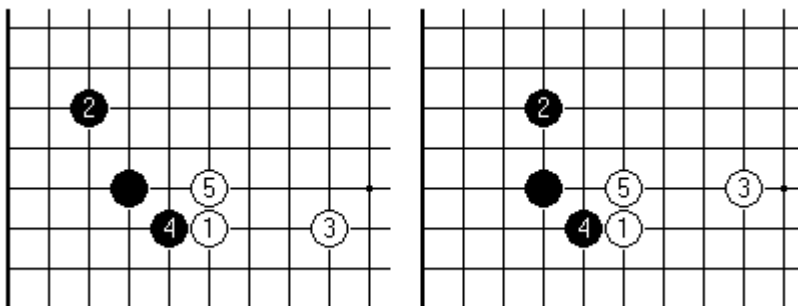
The other main variation here is Black playing 2 on the outside of White's approach stone. This corner opening becomes a trade of influence, and can continue on an ever-grander scale as both player push on up into the centre. White's problem in this context is that the marked black stone is at an ideal distance to nullify the effects of White's influence. It isn't going to come under attack because of the stable group Black has built to support it. Therefore White will be the loser in this position.



The proverb "from a two-stone wall extend three" is perfectly illustrated by one likely continuation. Here White 1 and 3 form the said wall, and White 5 is the recommended three-point extension, counting as usual the gap. This formation is considered ideal for White, considering the efficiency of stones. Certainly, if you compare it with the diagram before last, Black has less territory and White room for more (whether White can be invaded is a second-order question); and White can of course hold back 5 for security to a two-point extension and still seemingly be doing no worse.

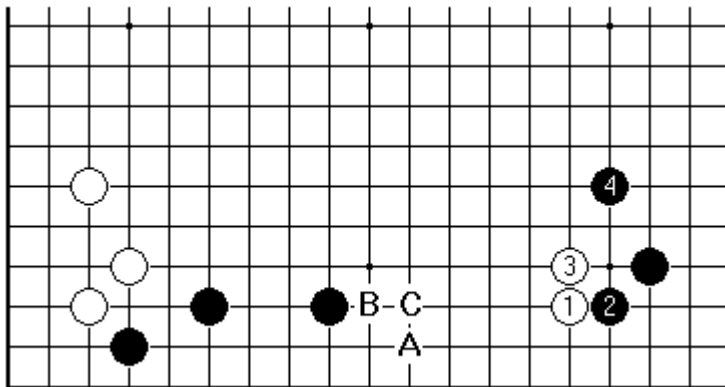


Knowing the proverb is one thing, knowing how to bring it to bear is another. Black can for example understand it as defining an ideal shape that one shouldn't give to the opponent. This will then persuade Black that the plays 1 in both of these diagrams are counter-productive, of more help to White than Black.

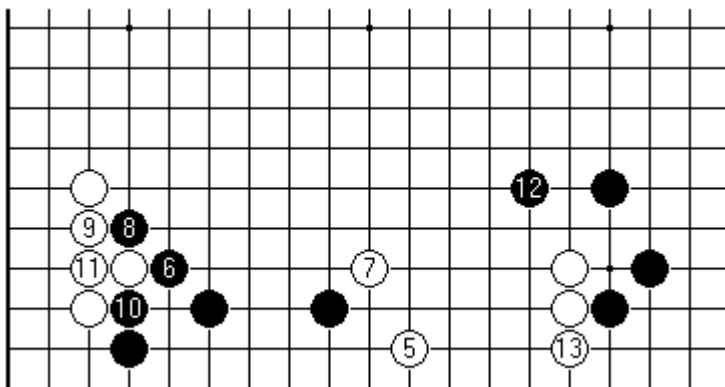


It is however rather harder to judge Black 4 in the left-hand diagram. White 3 was an idea being tried out by the world's top players around 1992-3. After White 5 it may appear that White 3 is misplaced; but the likes of Cho Chikun and Ma Xiaochun know

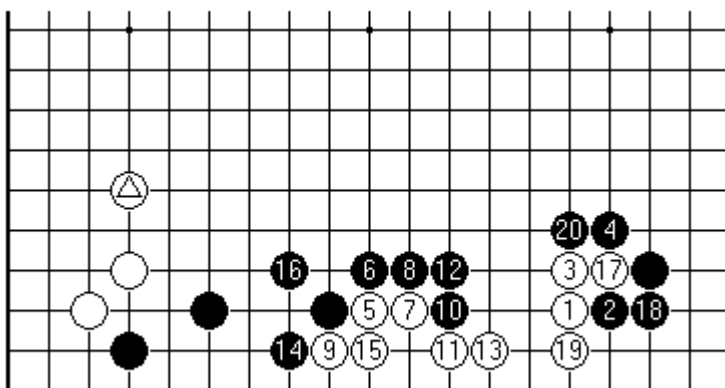
all that. Looking at the overall position it may be that Black 4 is too much help to White, in developing this group. Certainly Black 4 in the right-hand diagram has been considered poor, in general, for a long time.



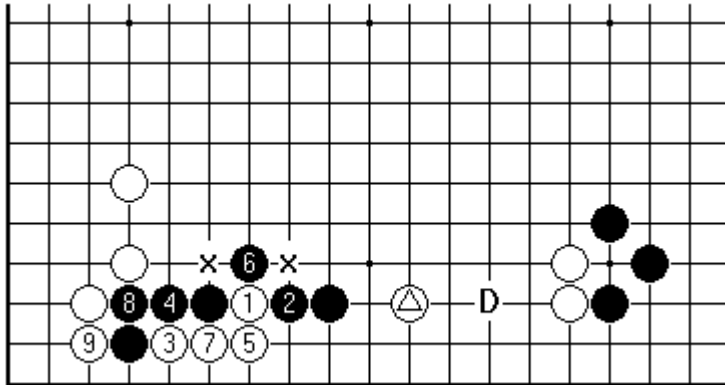
Returning to our theme, it is interesting that leading players differ on White's next play. White A has been played by Lee Chang-ho, by common consent the world's number one. B is common, and C leads to some unexpected analysis.



Here White's plays 5 and 13 on the second line are the personal, highly territorial Lee Chang-ho trademark. Black's groups have more developed shape, and he ended being able to take the initiative. (Black was Chang Soo-Young, the game was from the 1992 Kiseong League, Lee being 5 *dan* at the time).



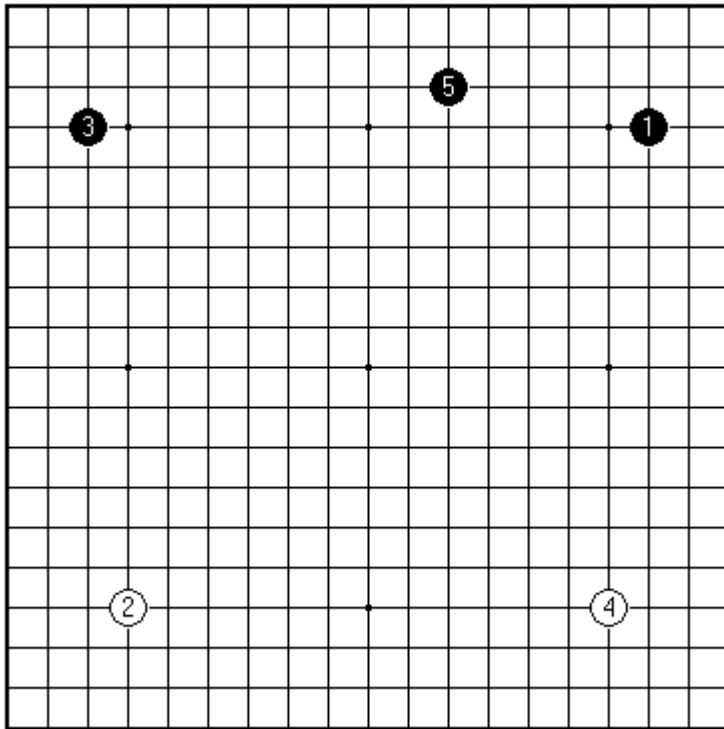
This is an early example (Honinbo League 1980) of the contact play B for White 5, played by Ishida Yoshio against Cho Chikun. The positions of Black 4 and the marked white stone were no doubt taken into account. In this case White lives on a small scale, while Black takes outside influence.



While the contact play B seems to have become the accepted way for White, dissent is heard from Fujisawa Shuko, now on the sidelines as a tournament player but highly influential as a coach. In a book he discounts the importance, after the plain extension C (marked stone), of the invasion point D. Instead he points out some deep-lying *aji* in Black's position. After White 1, White 3 at 7 meets Black 4 at 3, a combination known to many amateurs. But White 3 as shown is ferocious, intending to leave Black with the two cutting points marked 'x'. Black would have to tread very carefully in the fighting. Shuko argues that the marked white stone is therefore correctly placed, and that Black's invasion at D can be treated as a side issue.

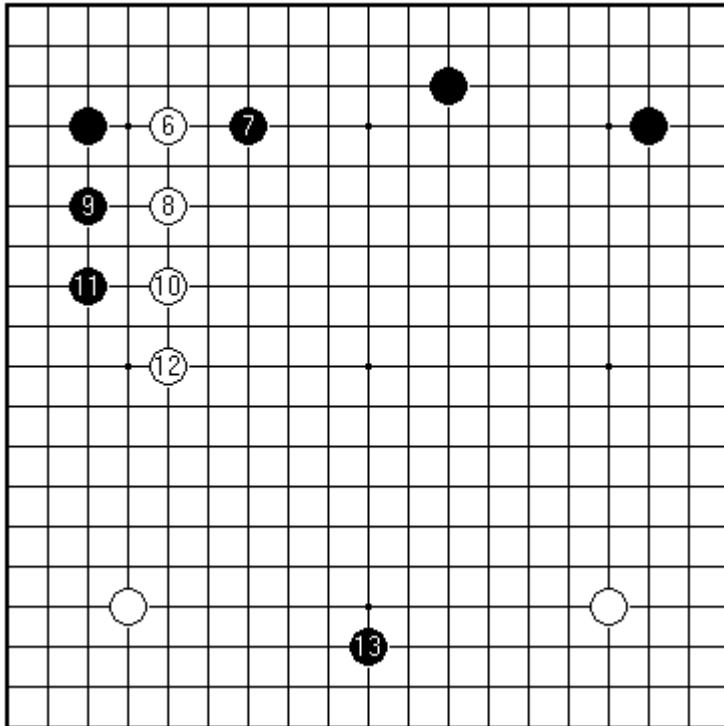
8. 9 Dans at Play

While I have every intention of sticking to the original aim of these pieces, of looking at ways to play on one side of the board, it seems too self-denying never to include whole games. Besides it turns out that we have touched upon all the main elements of theory mentioned in the initial article. It therefore might be reasonable to look at some **real life material**, to see how far we have travelled.



This is a game with an unorthodox opening. You could even call it a one-off: Black 5 is **unusually** placed. See for a moment if you can understand its meaning.

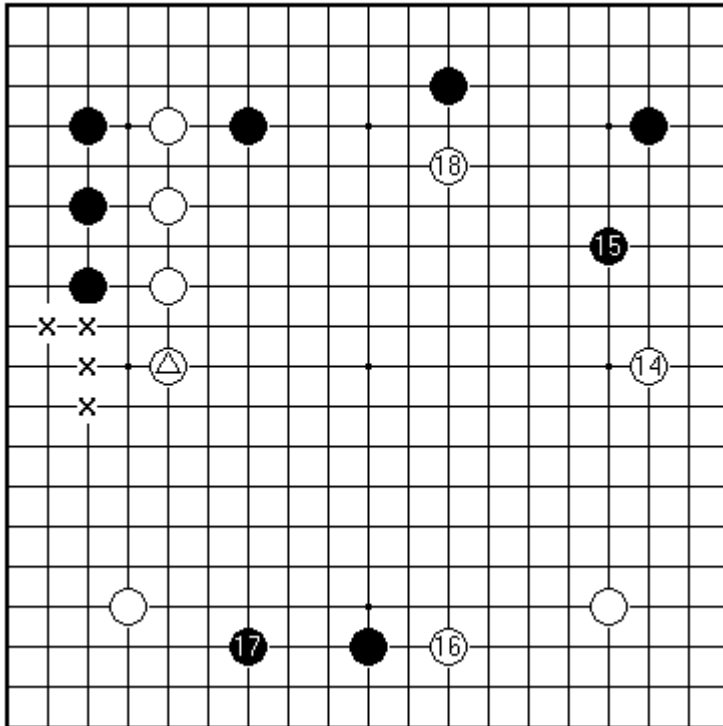
The players were Miyamoto Yoshihisa (Black) of the Kansai Ki-in (which split from the larger Nihon Ki-in nearly half a century ago), less well known to Western players than his brother and author Miyamoto Naoki; and Ishida Akira (White), co-author with James Davies of the excellent "Attack and Defense", one of the many genuinely strong players who never make it into the **charmed circle** of major title holders. The game is from 1996, in a knockout round to reach the final eight in the Tengen tournament. Both players are 9 *dans*.



Black's idea is the tight pincer 7 when White approaches the top left corner. That is, after Black 7 the stone played as Black 5 appears to be in good balance on the side.

White's reaction is to jump out three times with 8, 10 and 12. These plays give Black territory in the upper left. They will also form a **helpful background** when and if White gets round to invading the top right. Since there are two definite gaps there (between 7 and 5, between 5 and 1) White need not rush. The play 12 has the particular effect of creating central influence for White. By adding this one stone, White ensures that the group will not be too weak in the foreseeable future; but also changes the weather in the rest of the game. Exactly how we shall have to discuss.

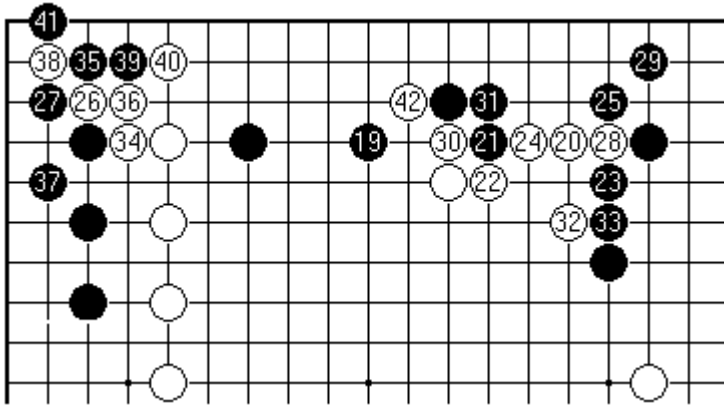
Black 13 is the **now-familiar** wedge. The question arises, how White should react to it.



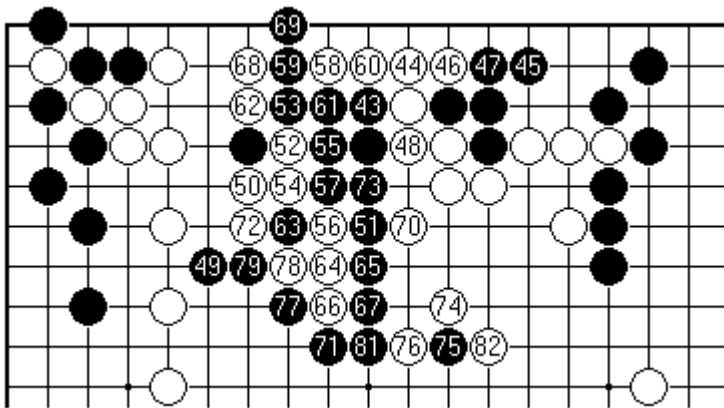
There is an imperfectly-suppressed **complaint** amongst some earnest students of modern Go openings, along the lines that anything can be explained with enough hindsight. A term like 'central influence', it may appear, can be deployed to prove whatever one chooses.

That's by no means fair, but does correspond to some of the **growth pains** of concept formation in Go. If you thought that the central influence of the marked white stone meant that White was going to build up a framework in the lower left, you'd be hard pressed to account for White's behaviour in the next few plays. White 16 indicates that White wishes to devalue the whole lower left corner - to leave it as an area where neither player can achieve a great deal. Instead White emphasises the lower right corner. White 14 limits Black's framework. If you wanted as White to play constructively in the lower left, you'd spend time wondering about a play at one of the 'x' points, to shut off the side. These plays, however, don't have an enormous effect on Black.

I agree that it's a hard road from having the effect of central influence pointed out, to being able to handle it competently in the myriad situations that come up in real games. That doesn't make commentary **vacuous**. You only have to try yourself to achieve the effects that 9 *dan* pros make without apparent effort, to see that none of it comes for free. A strong friend of mine is fond of the analogy of the swan swimming, where the hard work is all below the surface.

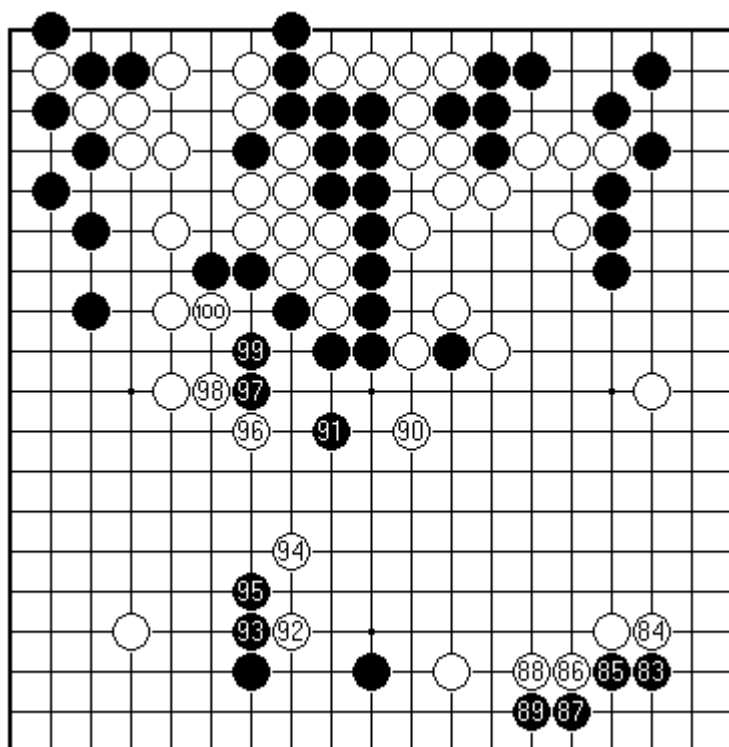


All attention is now on the upper side. White goes into action, probing for weaknesses. Up to 42 White seems to have found enough to work with; but one should note how **patient** both players are, in the way of preparing the ground and leaving few defects.

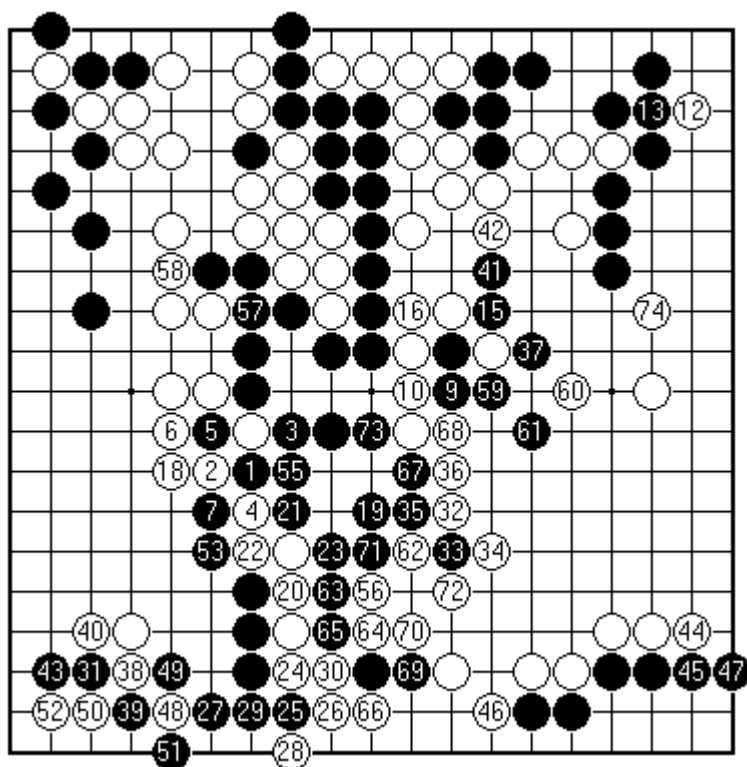


A major fight breaks out (White 80 is at 63). Black's play is criticised in the Kido Yearbook (43 should be 48, 51 should be 52, 75 is bad). It should at least be clear that once White has found an opening on the top side, the white stones to the left find their **purpose in life** as back-up in the fighting.

It might be absurd to write off Black's **experimental** opening on the basis of one game, but one can say that in this instance White did find enough defects to work up a good attack, while Black took around 40 points in the two corners.



Attention switches to the lower side as Black invades with 83. White on the other hand has no intention of letting Black **off the hook** in the centre. White 92 is a typical idea of roundabout attack: apparently directed against Black's group on the lower side, which isn't so weak, its follow-up at 94 aims squarely at netting Black's big dragon (as the Chinese say).

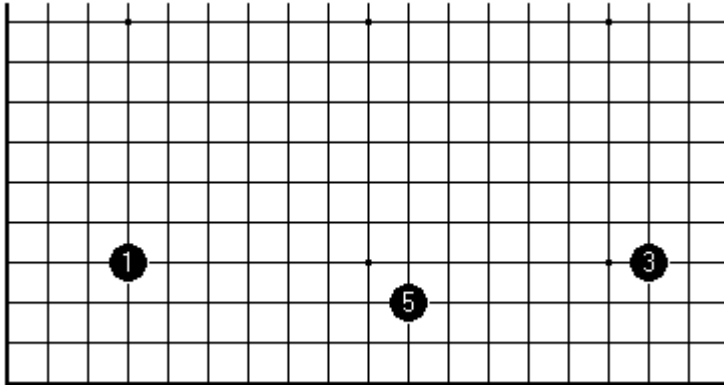


The rest of the game. Black resigned at White 174. Ko captures at 105/96: 108, 111, 114, 117, 154. White made it look quite simple to convert a good attacking position into a victory. The flurry of ko captures after 108 doesn't appear to have been a serious attempt by White to win there. The threats 109 and 115 by Black are the sort that can cost points later, and White presumably enjoyed seeing Black having to **resort** to them. When the game ends the black stones in the upper right centre are hanging by a thread.

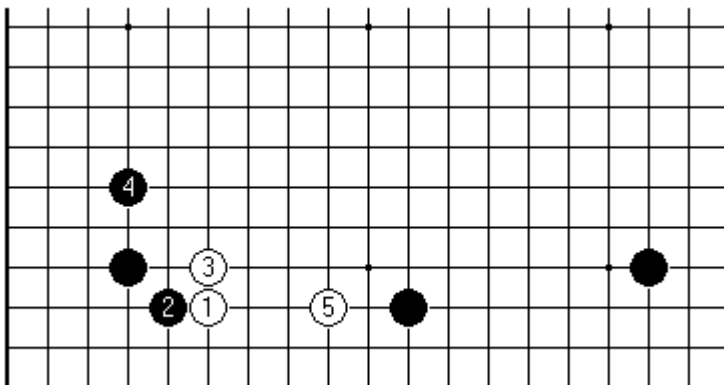
White didn't in fact at any point press the main attack. The turning point was White 124, cutting Black apart on the lower side. White ended up being able to take profit in several directions. The resignation may surprise some. There is one area of the board, the lower left side, which is **genuinely** hard to count. Leaving it out of consideration White might be ten points ahead on the board, with *komi* on top of that. That is, we assume for purposes of argument that the one problematic area will give Black no more points than White in the end. It is really no coincidence that this is the part of the board flagged already in the third diagram as intended by White not to be significant for either player.

9. Introducing the Chinese Style

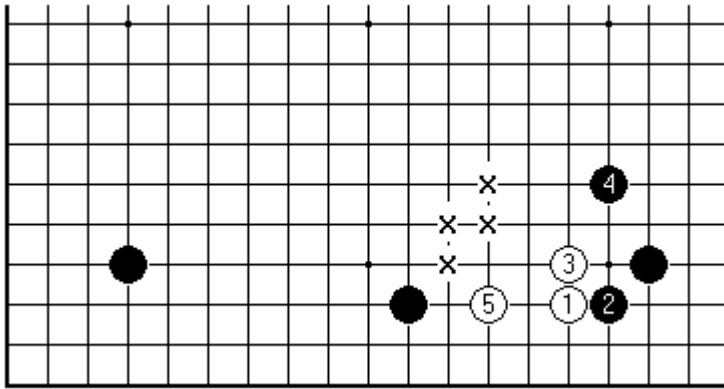
The Chinese style is a formation of three stones on one side that has established itself over the past 25 years of professional Go as a major opening.



The characteristic play in the Chinese is 5 here, on the side. The combination of 3 and 5, the so-called 'Chinese enclosure', has by now been studied in **depth**. Compared to a normal enclosure of the right-hand corner, it relates in a more obvious way with the 4-4 point in the left-hand corner. This order 1-3-5 is usual - the Chinese style developed concurrently with the fashion to start the game on a 4-4 point - but 3-1-5 is seen too.

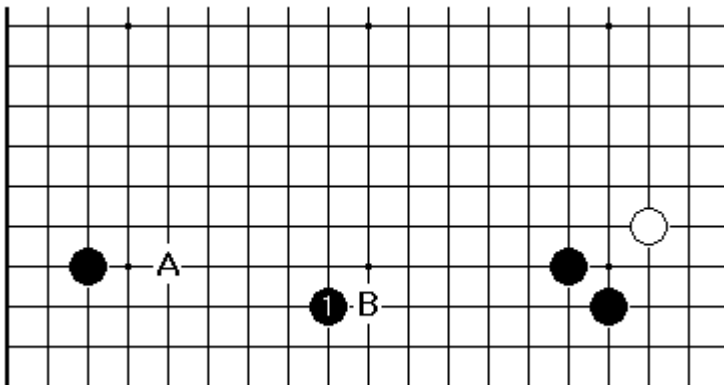


Playing the Chinese enclosure means that Black can restrict White to an **inefficient** extension 5, if White enters the framework at 1 here.

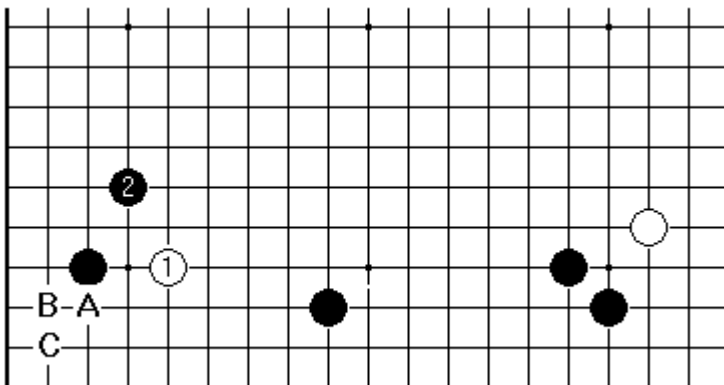


If White plays a low approach to the other corner, the available extension on the third line, to 5, provides too small a base. Therefore White in practice would look to play at one of the 'x' points. It is, however, poor strategy for White to create a **weak** group like this. Black can expect to build up the framework to the left by attacking it.

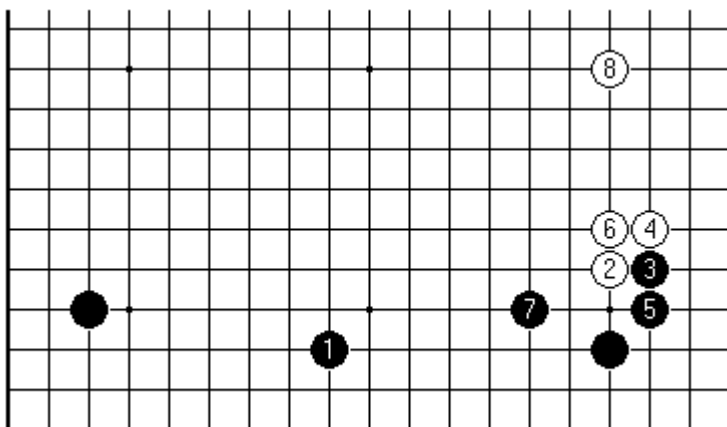
If you play the Chinese, your opponent will take two other corners. That means that you are nailing your flag to the mast, devoting yourself to cultivating a **single** framework, much more so than with (say) the mini-Chinese. In the early days White too experimented with the Chinese formation, but now it is generally seen as a strategy for Black. The history is quite tangled.



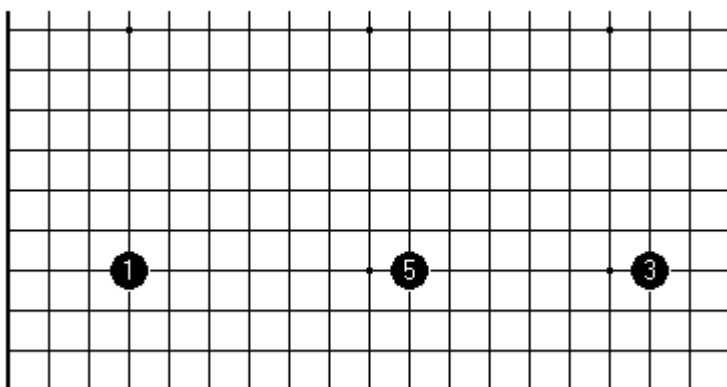
A century ago this use of the Chinese enclosure was common enough. If Black made the enclosure at A first, White would have a **perfect** wedge at B.



White normally came in at 1 here. After Black 2 White tended to leave the stone played to its own devices, **relying** on Black not being able to capture it on a large scale. The sequence White A, Black B, White C remains as *aji* in the corner, so there is some justification.



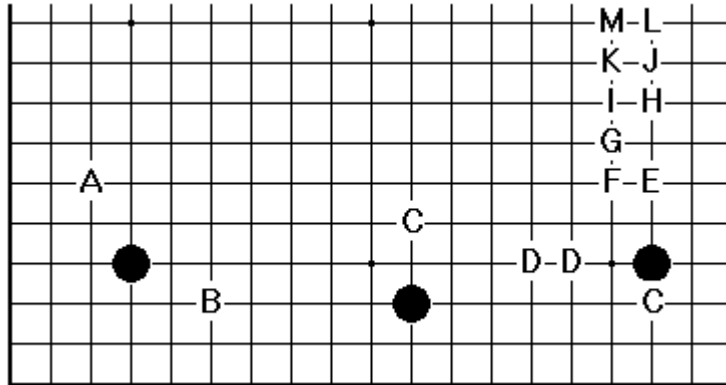
Kitani Minoru tried the Chinese enclosure in a top match in 1959 (Honinbo Final game 3, against Takagawa). Black 7 makes a **balanced** formation along the side. This was after earlier experiments by Go Seigen and Kitani with plays at 1, in positions where the right-hand corner was already conventionally enclosed.



In the 1961 Amateur Honinbo tournament, Harada, one of the Big Four recognised top **amateurs** in Japan, played this 1-3-5 formation. Now called the 'high' or 'revised' Chinese, it enjoyed a tremendous vogue from its introduction in pro play in 1974. These days the original 'low' Chinese is more popular once more, perhaps because it appeals to territorial players while the influence-seekers adopt purely 4-4 point openings.

The scene then does really move to China. Chen Zude, now the *doyen* of Chinese professional Go, was looking for a flexible and convincing strategy for a match against the formidable Kajiwara Takeo 9 *dan*. This search is described in the Yutopian book *Beauty and the Beast*, as Chen prepared for the deadly serious business of a China-Japan "friendship" encounter. After games in 1965 the pattern went underground for a while, surfacing in the 1968 Nihon Ki-in Championship played by Shimamura, and noted at the time as a "**souvenir** from China" after

another friendship tour. Kajiwara often played the Chinese enclosure in other contexts. It took another five years after that for it really to hit the headlines, becoming high fashion in 1973. The major source in English, *The Chinese Opening* by Kato, is a translation of a Japanese book from 1977, and therefore covers only a fraction of the professional research on this opening.



To explain in broad terms White's ways of dealing with the Chinese: there is a **progression** from left to right, and showing increasing complexity, as indicated by the labels in this diagram.

White approaches from the open side at A.

White approaches at B. In this case Black plays to steal White's base. White tries to settle the weak group, Black tries to build up the Chinese enclosure into a larger or more secure framework by attacking it.

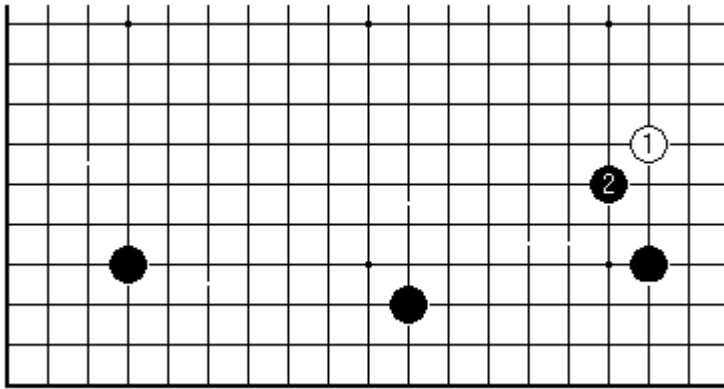
White caps at C (centre). This is a reduction manoeuvre suitable for a large-scale game in which both players have big frameworks. Black will normally choose to defend the Chinese enclosure, but White has a useful play at the other C point, at 3-3 in the right-hand corner, with the aim of leaving some *aji*.

White comes in at one of the points D. There are many well-explored variations.

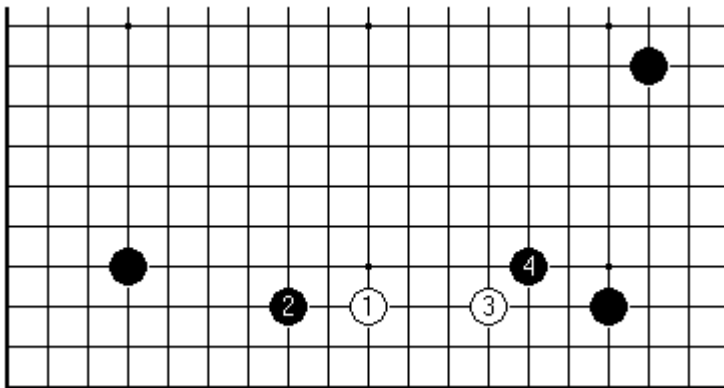
White plays at one of the points E to M. Assuming a White 4-4 stone in the top right corner, as we look at it, this is now the most common strategy. These plays are **prolific** of innovations. A safe idea is simply to play M. Next White plays G, allowing Black to enclose the corner. If White starts at G Black can pincer at M, and the fun really begins.

We'll look in greater detail at all of this as the series continues. Judging by games on the [Go Teaching Ladder](#), the Chinese styles (low and high) are enormously **popular** still amongst amateurs.

For the moment, something that sticks out like a sore thumb from the previous diagram. Not to be needlessly mysterious, here's an explanation.



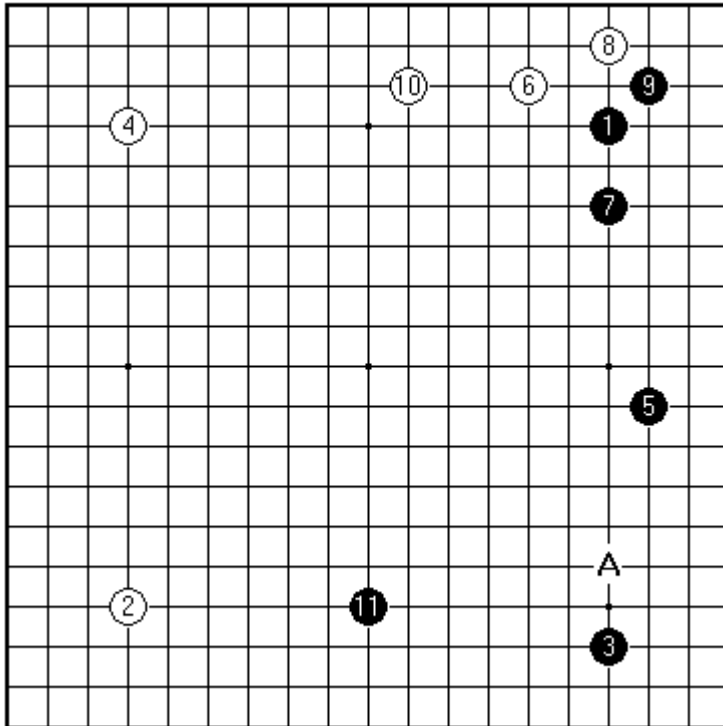
What about White 1 here? It seems not to be chosen by pros, and one can look for a reason. Eventually they get round to trials of all the **reputable** possibilities in a position. Black 2 is a very good play in this case, certainly. White by pushing moves against it will only help to build up Black's right corner.



Exactly that relationship with the Chinese enclosure has been seen in very many recent games featuring the mini-Chinese. As we show it, the mini-Chinese Black has created stretches up the right-hand side of the board. That then forms, with the Black 4-4 point in the left corner, an example of what my colleague John Fairbairn **insists** on calling the 'Sideways Chinese'. Be that as it may, this is currently most modish. White plays the wedge at 1, reasonably enough (the alternate wedge one to the right may be no better). Then Black 4 is ideally placed. There is no real problem for White to settle the group, but if Black thereby consolidates the right corner it may prove expensive.

10. Chinese: Open Side Approach

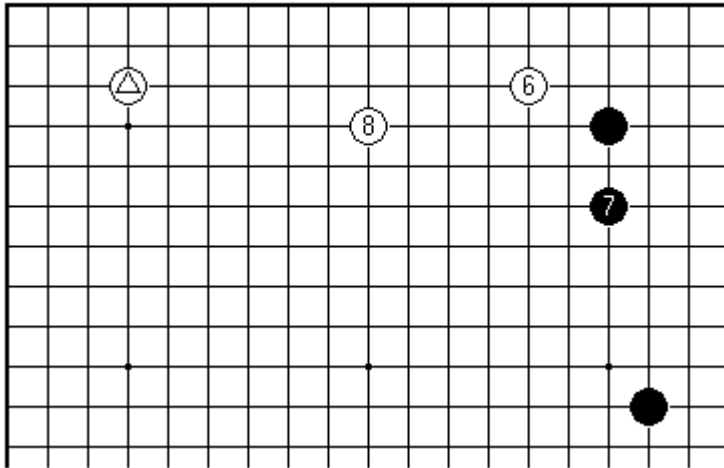
Here's a typical whole-board view of a game opening displaying the **Chinese** style, introduced in the previous article of this series.



White approaches the upper right corner from the open side, and plays it out according to a common pattern. Black plays 7 on the fourth line for good balance with 5. Black's formation on the right side is beginning to look **efficient**.

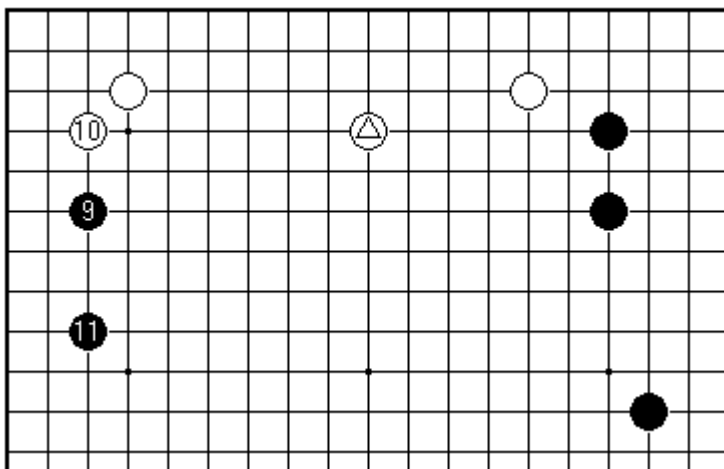
When it comes to playing 11 on the lower side, Black reveals the basic conception behind the Chinese style. Why is Black 11 not played at A, to enclose the corner? Because White could then play at 11, leaving Black **concentrated** on one side of the board (and without a significant store of completely secure territory). Another kind of balance that ought to be borne in mind relates to spreading out over the whole available area on the 19x19 board. Putting it another way, with Black A already in place, Black at 5 is one of a number of big points you could choose, but not obviously the biggest.

Therefore you can say that Black is committed to a play like 11 from the outset, leaving White free to come into the corner at A. This provides the distinctive problem of the Chinese style. The open side approach White 6 anticipates that White will want to play at or near A in entering Black's framework, rather than between the stones 1 and 5. White must choose the **correct** moment to contest the corner, before (perhaps just before) Black consolidates there.

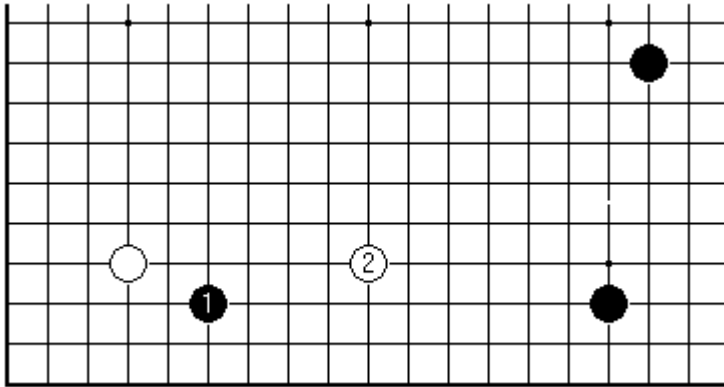


The open side approach is therefore commended as perfectly sound strategy. White must plan on later dealing with Black's framework, but has time to build a competing zone of influence. This lack of early panic about the opponent's prospects is characteristic of the cool detachment of professionals. It has to be said that the **tentative** methods of the first phase of Chinese style games showed nothing of the sort. In the absence of a good estimate of the value of the framework, White tended to get stuck in as soon as possible. Perhaps 1975, a year in which dozens of top games featured the Chinese, was the turning point, as the possible strategies started to be set in some order.

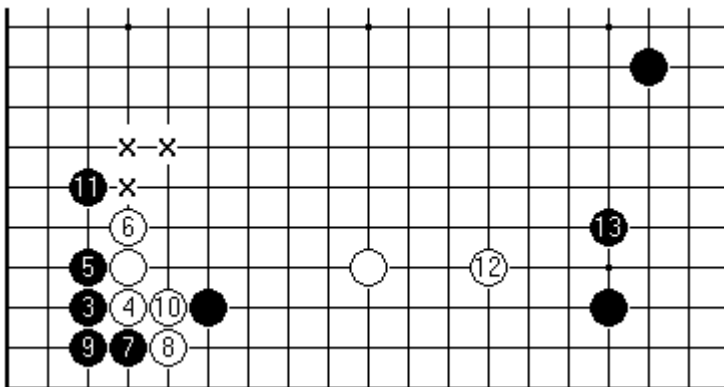
White, as I say, has a little time to look around. With the marked white stone in the top left, it is natural enough for White to play this way across the top side. The formation is now sometimes known as the Kobayashi style, and we'll come across it later, but strictly speaking Kobayashi Koichi's name attaches to it as a way for Black to develop. In this sort of position it was seen as a plan for White years before that came up. (This phenomenon of **cross-dressing**, Black borrowing White's typical plans and vice versa, is quite important for the history of opening theory in Go, and little remarked upon.)



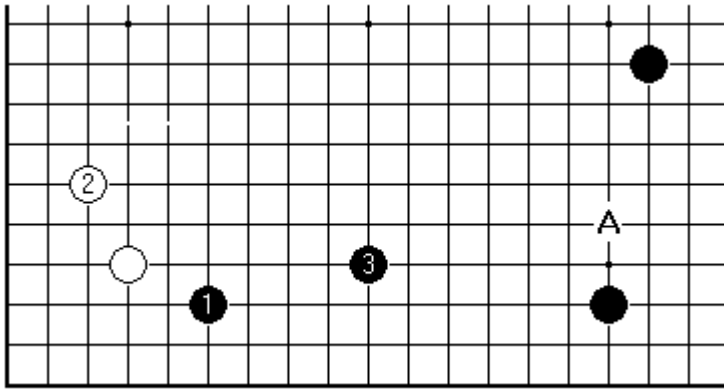
In that case the game might continue this way. The top left corner has become a significant area - if White encloses it, White's formation across the top side is very



That would give White a chance to pincer, as with 2. White here gets an opportunity to play on a scale at least as grand as Black.



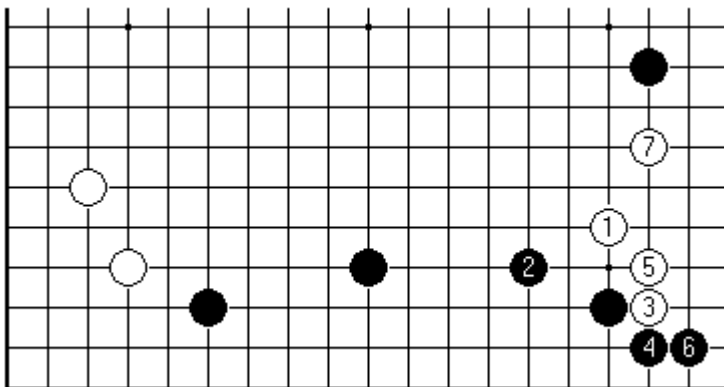
It has to be said, though, that while plans of this kind have been seen in top level games, they haven't been so popular recently.



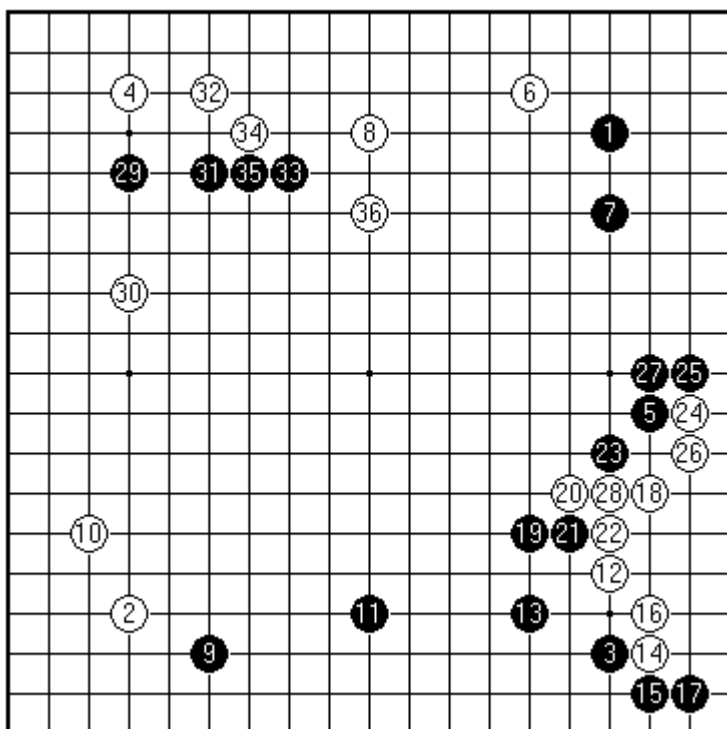
Therefore White should perhaps be **content** to allow Black to finish the framework on the lower side. White cannot put off invading at A for ever. In fact the moment might be imminent.

The way of thinking behind White 2 is worth a thought. White starts one step behind in the game. If both sides build frameworks it is hard to see White getting ahead. White is compensated by *komi*, but this will normally not be enough if White has to pick unfavourable fights just to keep in the game. White 2 is the sort of **measured** play that recognises the difference between the two players' tasks. Consistent with the open side approach, White aims simply to make the left side of the board an area in which Black can't achieve very much.

And so does White now invade the lower right? I don't want to be a tease, but are you ready for the discussion of how that would go? It involves, in some of the variations, special techniques and less common **shapes**. In a word, it's back to business as usual for corner openings.



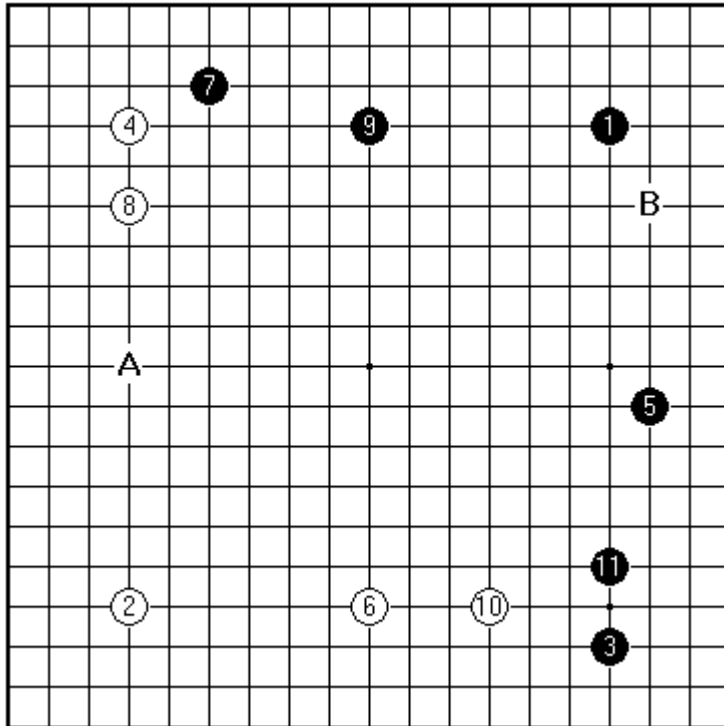
I do offer the best-known way to play. Black 2 looks to build up the lower side. White is happy up to 7 to secure a small base for the invading group. Further attempts to **pressure** White can be expected from Black.



Here then is a hypothetical opening on the whole board, with both sides adhering to conventional methods. There is still little enough in the way of secure territory (Black has a chance to invade later between 6 and 8, as White has between 9 and 11). White's group in the lower right has settled, at the **cost** of answering a number of Black's plays. In contrast Black's group in the upper left is running out in search of security, but also seeking an active role in fighting. White is planning to develop territory between 10 and 30. If White attacks it overconfidently, it may turn out to be useful back-up for an invasion on the left side.

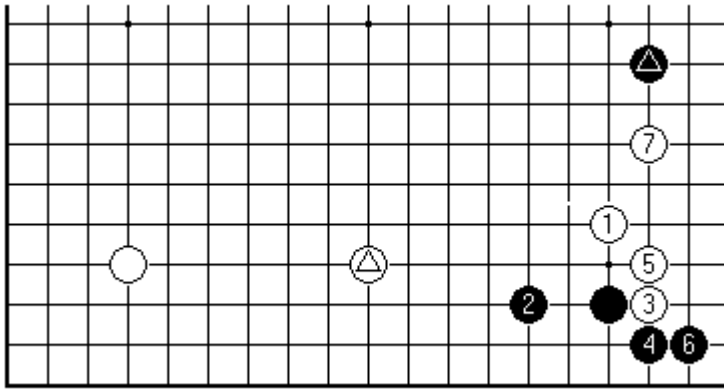
11. Chinese: Lower Side Plays

Speaking as we were of the Chinese-style opening pattern, which is the 'lower' side is conventionally determined.

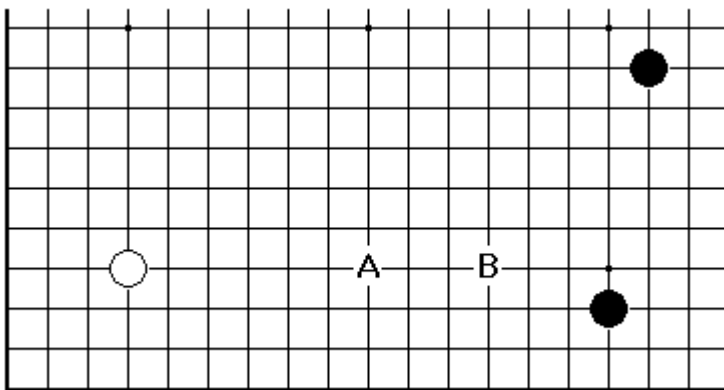


This is the **normal** view Black has of the board, with first play at 4-4 top right (as is customary in Japan and Korea). White 6 is representative of the numerous possible lower side plays that have been tried.

White's idea is to **pre-empt** the expansion of Black's framework at the point that has special meaning (see last time). There is the same kind of relationship between White 6 as played, and a later invasion by White at B, as there is between White's open side approach on the upper side and a subsequent invasion at 11. That is, White can take an early view on the two gaps in Black's right-side formation, above and below, and act accordingly in occupying a side. After Black 11 it looks like a choice between White A, for a very large-scale game, and White B to keep Black's framework to within reasonable proportions by securing a small base for a group within it.



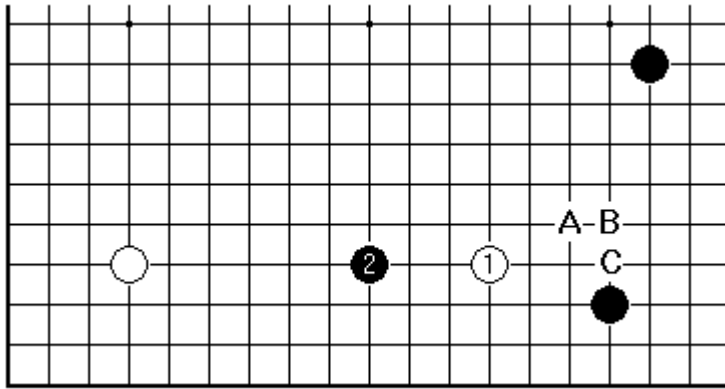
Could White challenge Black in the lower right corner **directly**, rather than play 10, which might come hard to those grudging their opponent any territory at all? Early research on the Chinese threw up the sober play 2 in answer to White 1 here. After 7 the black marked stone is still making a 100% contribution, cramping the new white group. On the other hand the white marked stone is 'out of focus' - harder to say what exactly it has achieved.



Instrumental in developing the theory of the Chinese enclosure seems to have been the **realisation** that the points A and B here can in a certain way be treated as *miai*.

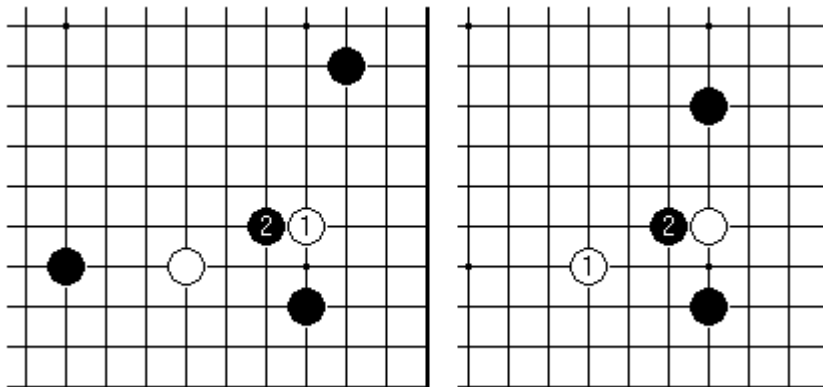
In the variation given at the outset, White gets both of them. White is then constrained to play in a particular style, to suit the 4-4 points. In fact from the mid-1980s precisely that style, which you could call Takemiya-with-White, became increasingly **popular** in professional play. It is more subtle than Takemiya-with-Black, the more recognisable 'cosmic' style of early framework play of maximum breadth. That is however exactly what you'd expect: White's task is initially uphill work.

Therefore, as I say, there is scope for the interesting twists White A Black B, where Black plays to prevent the framework being **pegged** so far back to the right, and also White B Black A, the characteristic through-the-looking-glass pincer of the Chinese.



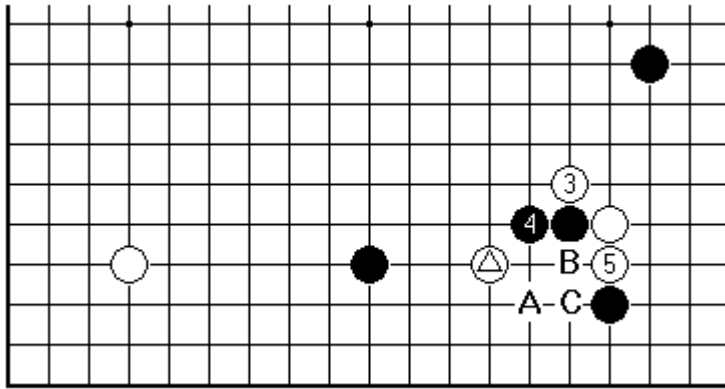
To emphasise the point, White 1 here is a transgressive play, according to conventional thinking. White is supposed to approach a 4-3 point in the corner from the **other** direction, say at B. Starting at 1 is therefore an imaginative idea, based on the whole board situation - White is indicating contentment with the position after Black at B, White at 2.

At this point Black can play from the right in other ways, to try for the corner but with extra efficiency. Black's positive answer at 2 may date from 1983; it has certainly become **accepted**. White is constrained to develop a group while outnumbered. The candidate plays at A, B and C have all been studied in depth.

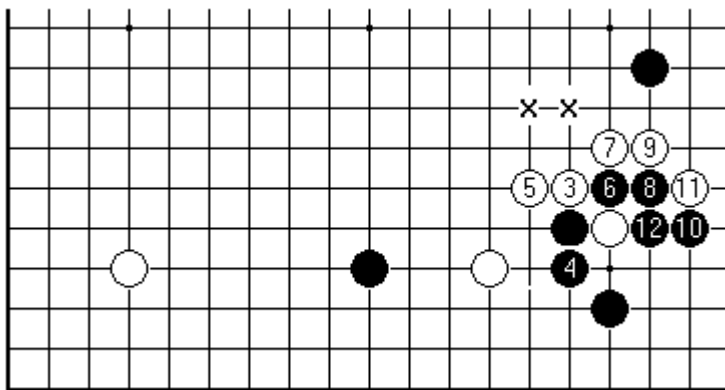


Choice B would be the one coming naturally to the informed player. With 1 and 2 as shown in the left-hand diagram we are wading towards firmer ground. The position in the right-hand diagram is the **main** line of the 'Magic Sword' corner opening.

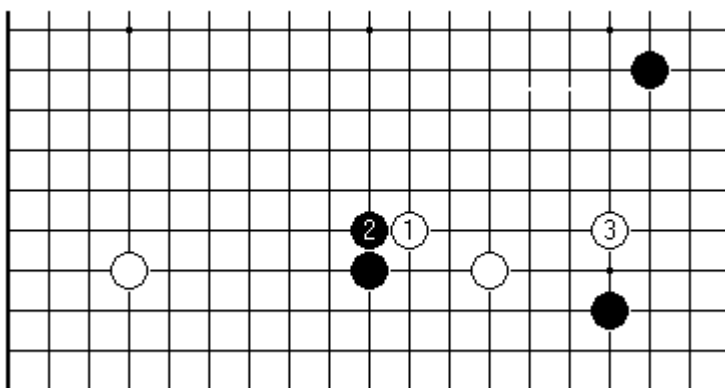
On a historical note White 1 there is the innovation of Fujisawa Hosai 9 *dan* from a match game against Go Seigen in 1952. [Attribution is wrong in the recent book *Essential Joseki* by Rui Naiwei (Yutopian), which is a shame since Fujisawa's career was effectively **broken** by the unsuccessful effort to knock Go off his perch.]



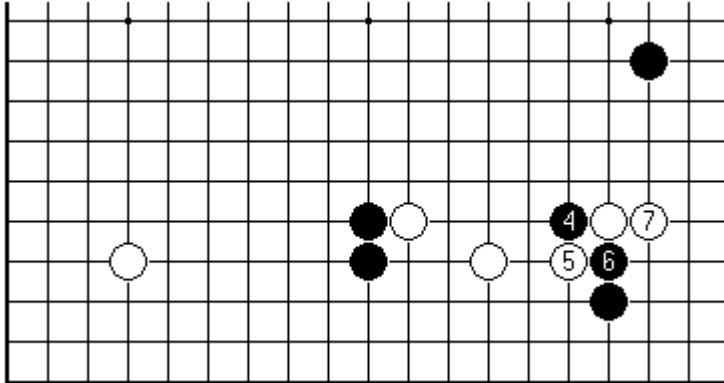
Continuing, with 3 and 5 following the Magic Sword pattern, this is all going to plan for White. Black A next is the Magic Sword main line, but surely too easy on White here. Therefore Black will spend time pondering B and C, sharper options **discarded** these days in the Sword. White is pleased, in fact, with this trend; the marked white stone is for sacrifice here, and Black is stretching to find a good way to play. Black 4 is perhaps questionable.



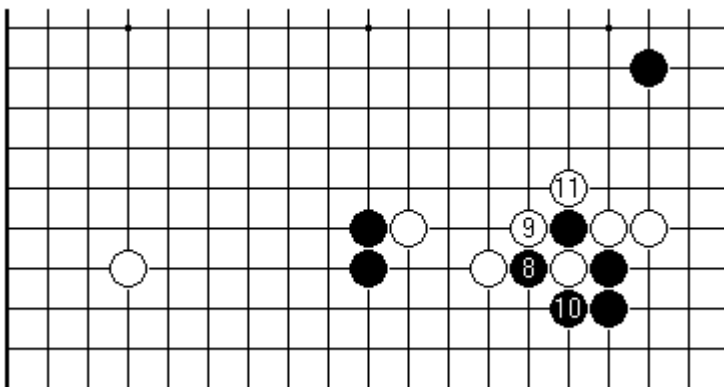
Black chooses 4 instead, to make more of the position. This lets us out of the Magic Sword **rut**. It is one thing to realise that context changes everything in Go, something else again to implement that flexibility. This variation gets into the new edition of the *Ishida Joseki Dictionary* (sorry, Japanese only for the foreseeable future). White has allowed Black the corner, and needs an honest move at one of the 'x' points to make shape round here.



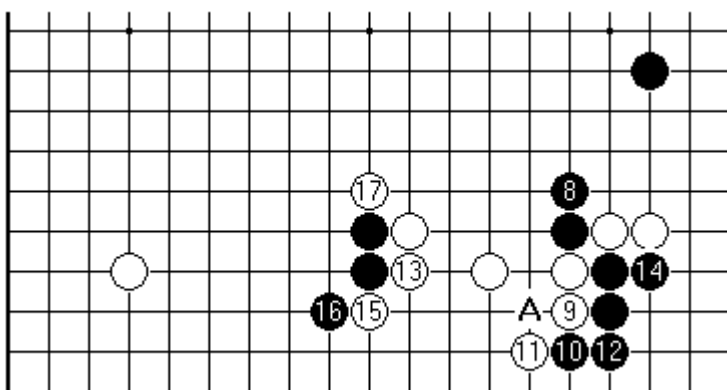
Innovation rolls on, however, especially in the Korean **powerhouse** of goal-directed research. Here's an astonishing Cho Hun-hyun idea, reported in the third volume of *Lee Chang-ho's Novelties* (the first two volumes are available now in English translation from Yutopian). Play White 1 first, presumably getting the answer 2, before coming in at 3.



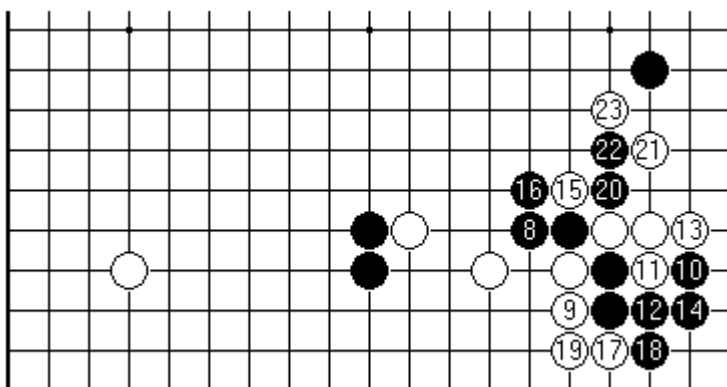
The intention is to mix it after Black plays 4. The warlike 5 and 7 are a concerted attempt to **isolate** Black's corner, the heart, as you will recall, of Black's intended grand framework.



Black can't go down this road with 8. White 9 sets up a well-known tactic for confinement. The physicist Richard Feynman used to say that giving identifiable things their own names does nothing special; but the case of concept formation in Go seems to contradict that, and the Victor Chow term 'ko lock' for plays like 9 seems a **useful** addition.



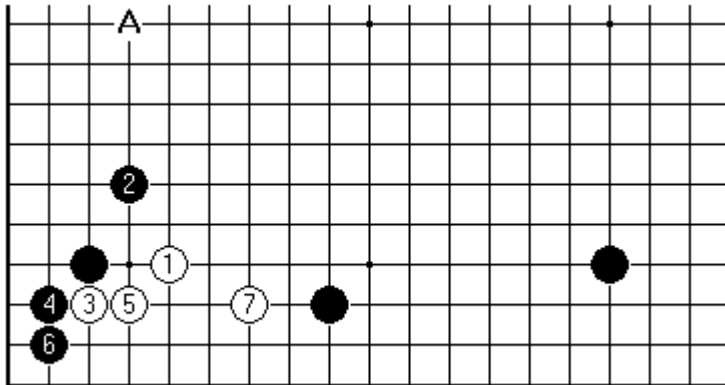
Extending up with Black 8 is also a relative **failure**. White leaves the cutting point at A behind, since 11 can be sacrificed in a couple of interesting ways. Black 14 to close down the corner gives White a free hand on the outside with 15 and 17.



This is given as the correct continuation (in the actual game White missed 15). Black is in trouble because the corner group is **dead** as it stands, while White can escape on both sides.

12. Chinese: Staying Light

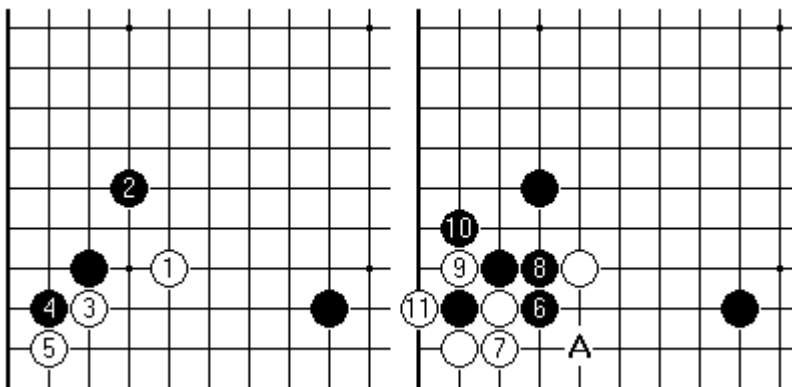
One of Black's aims in playing the Chinese style is surely to **hustle** White early into middlegame positions.



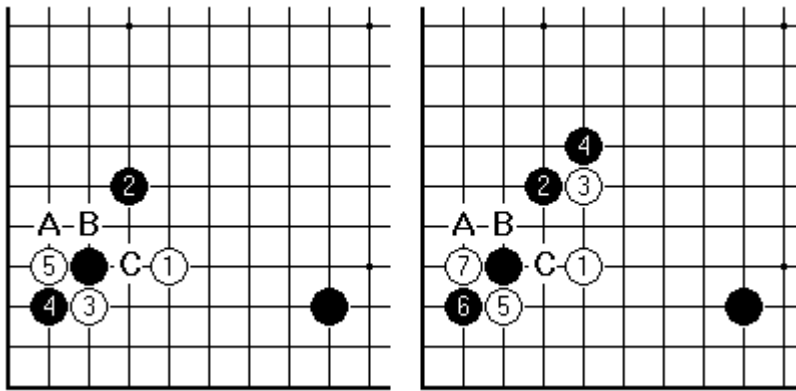
White's idea here has already been seen. Black may already have a stone at or near A. In playing immediately for a small **base** White emphasises settling a group early.

This is a sound plan, but there are others. A great deal is known in this context about plays either that vary at 5, to aim for alternate **leverage** on the corner space, or jump out earlier at 3 into the centre.

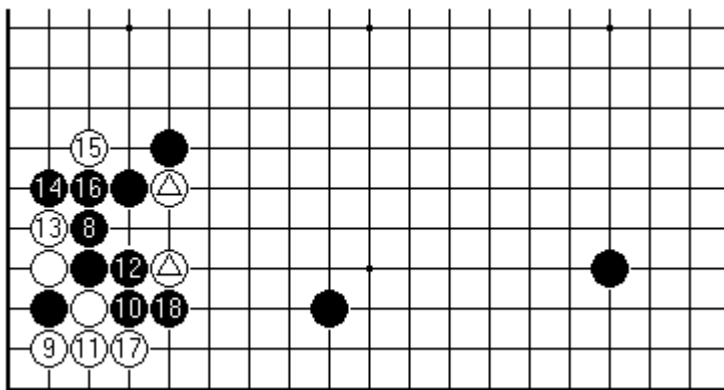
What these have in common is their 'light' quality: effects are achieved by not **fussing** about the fate of individual stones. In a sense White is taking up Black's challenge, responding with normal middlegame techniques.



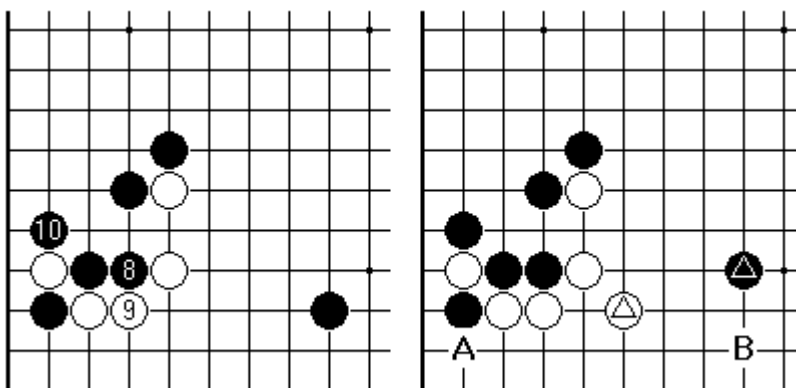
White 5 after 3 at the 3-3 point in the corner is a **fundamental** idea of light play. Since Black 6 at 7 is a bad idea, the continuation shown is nearly inevitable. White has lived neatly, and can later jump out at A. This isn't however considered to be a mainline variation. It would be very handy for White to play out the corner in this way, at some point in the middlegame. Do it too early, though, and Black's overall position can start to look very solid. That is the same strategic tension as limits use of a 3-3 invasion behind a 4-4 point.



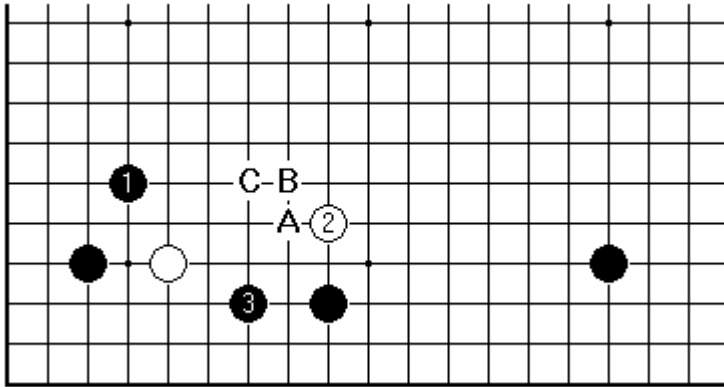
Moving through the normal tactical repertoire, the next idea that should be tried is the cross-cut 5 after 3 at the 3-3 point. Black answers A, B and C (left-hand diagram) are somewhat constrained: Black can't expect a great result if White can break through on the side with B. It was realised that White's idea is more **effective** if White first exchanges 3 for 4 (right-hand diagram). This has an impact on Black's response at A, to which White B becomes a good answer.



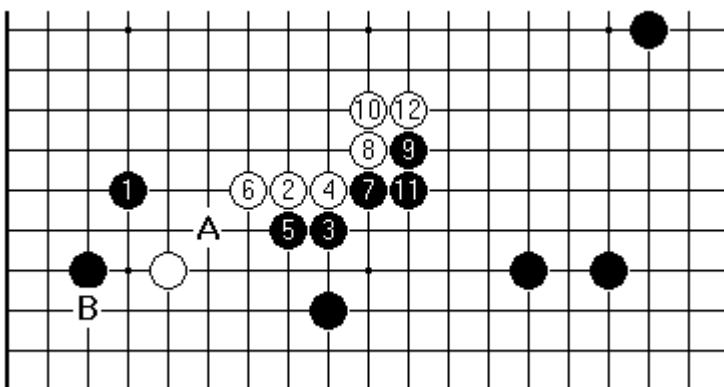
This therefore is one standard continuation. White does **better** in living in the corner than previously. Notice that White plays 17, not because it is intrinsically good - it weakens the two marked stones - but because a Black play here would actually threaten the corner.



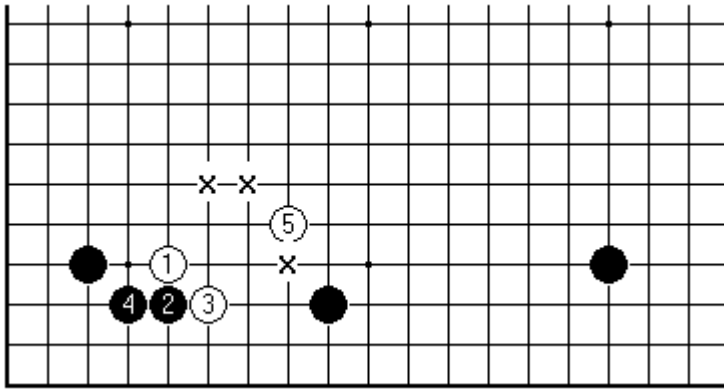
If Black exchanges 8 for 9, White can be content. However it goes after that, Black has put the two-stone chain including 8 into **bad shape**. Black 10 immediately is safest, but White's problem of making shape on the outside has become simplified. When Black plays the high Chinese formation, as in the right-hand diagram where the marked black stone is on the fourth line, the slide at B is very attractive for White, so that simply making the hanging connection (marked white stone) should be enough, making *miai* of A and B.



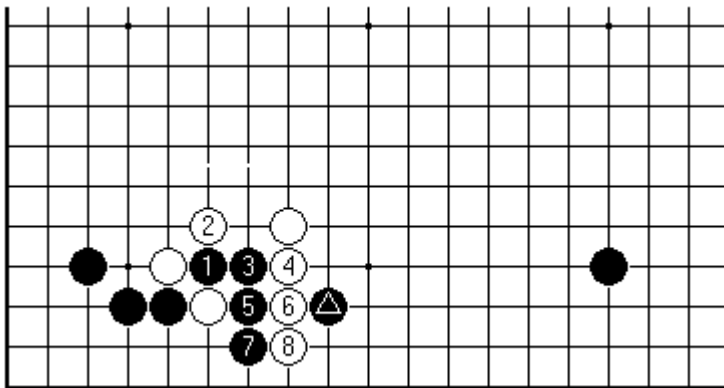
Another idea that prevailed in the early days of the Chinese is that White should jump out into the centre, for example with 2 here. The possibilities in the corner remain, and that takes the pressure off White as far as being immediately disconnected is concerned. It isn't clear that these **plans** have stood the test of time. Black 3 is a good answer to 2 as shown. There are also White A, aiming next to press Black down to the right; White B which is a one-off from a top match; and White C, which I have tried myself (Matthew Cocke 5 *dan*'s idea of Black 3 seems to be good enough in answer).



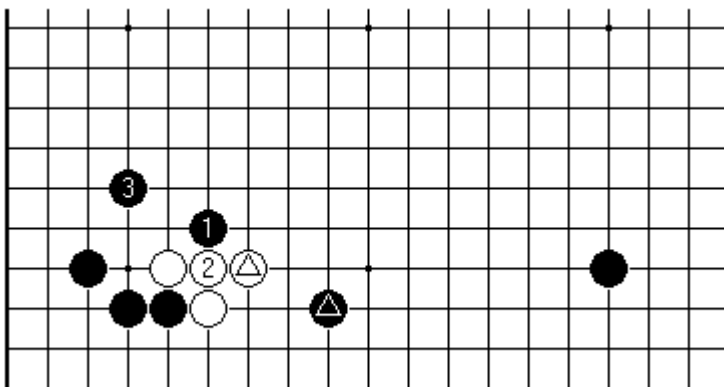
This choice of 2 was played by Ishida in game 3 of the 1973 Meijin match against Rin Kaiho. The shape was **unusual** enough to stretch the Go lexicon - 'large leap' was suggested, from a Chinese term. Ishida's approach to Go is noted for its rationality, as contrasted with the traditional artistic ambitions. The game sequence shown here simply aims to control Black's framework to the right. White isn't concerned about Black at A while the chance to play at B remains.



A different idea for Black, now rare, is to play in contact with 2. At 5 White has a number of good plays, the other 'x' points being candidates too. The key thing is to develop shape that defends by **indirect** means the cut next to White 1 and 3.

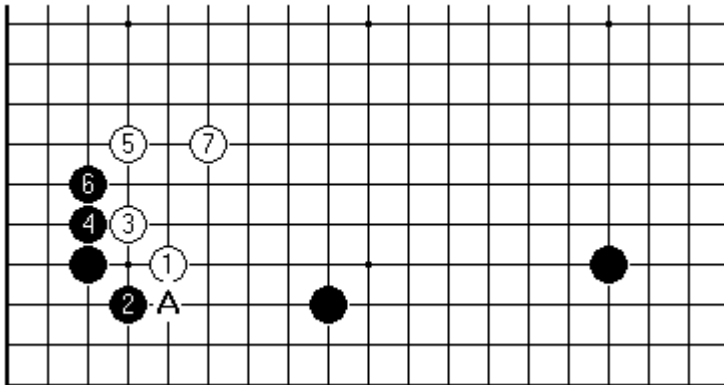


That is, Black 1 here is a big **failure**. White 2 and so on are an example of the 'driving' manoeuvre. They leave Black wondering why the marked stone was ever played.

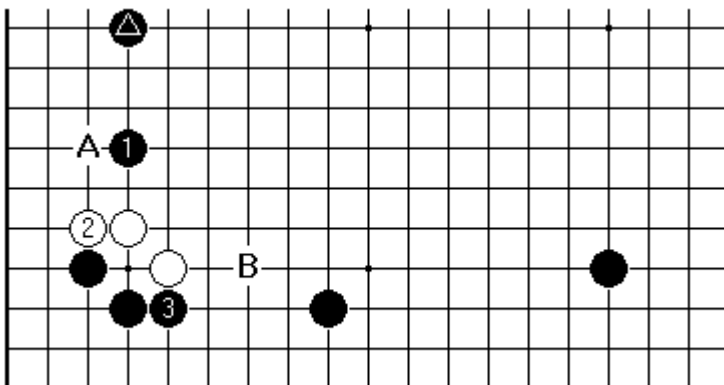


What White at all costs must avoid is a **rigid** adherence to the set patterns. For example the hanging connection with the marked white stone is bad. It is easy for Black to attack as shown. One cannot simply ignore nearby stones such as the marked black one. They must somehow be factored into the plan. White has ended

up with a heavy group - one that is hard to defend. Normally making a heavy group signifies unskilful play of the stubborn persuasion.



Black's second string attack is in fact this **quiet** diagonal play at 2. White isn't going to answer at A, which would amount to the same as having approached at A in the first place, a heavy play as was seen in the first part on the Chinese. White 3 is recognised as correct in this case, and White makes shape in the centre (7 is seen also one to the right).

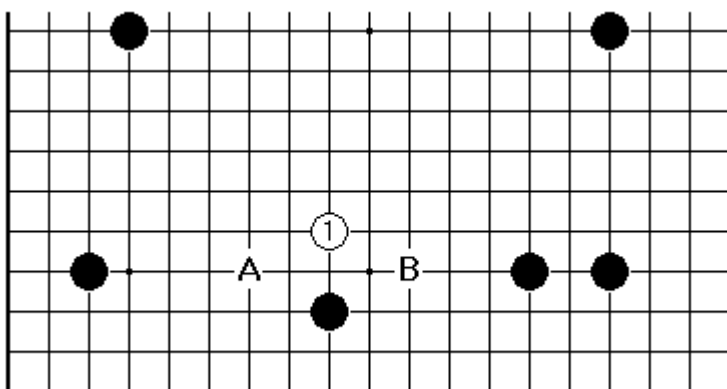


In 1998 some of the big beasts of the Go jungle started to disturb the peace by attacking forcefully from the direction of 1, when backed up by a stone such as the marked one. After 2 and 3 White has **resources** at A and B, but is still in danger of forming a heavy group. There seems no end in sight for the debate over how the game should go, when White comes close in to the Chinese framework.

13. Chinese: Reduction Plays

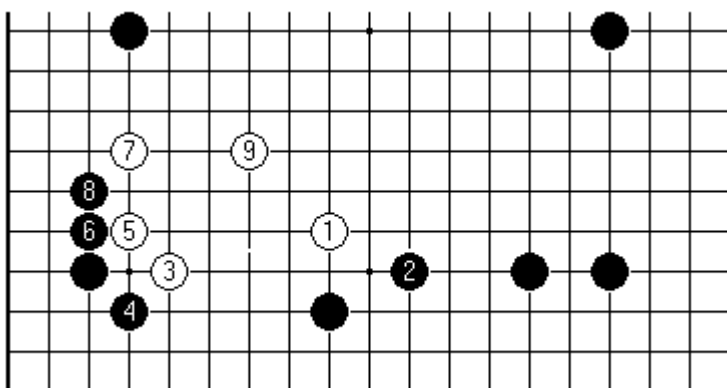
It has been noted already that the Chinese style poses a problem of timing for consolidation, and invasion. If White allows Black's development of the side to continue **unhindered**, the game may become a framework contest on the grand scale.

It is almost never seen in high-level Go that a game divided into two frameworks proceeds directly to the endgame. One side eventually **leaps** in. You may construe that as an act of aggression, but forming a weak group where your opponent is already strong will always lead into a few plays meeting a stiff defensive tariff.

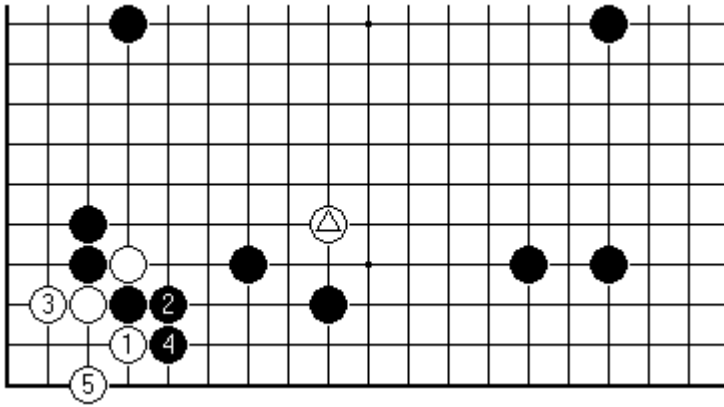


Defensive skill is a non-negotiable **requirement** to become strong. In a well-fortified framework such as this one, in which Black invested six plays before White replied, the capping play at 1 is a good choice. According to a proverb on shape, Black considers answering at A or B, in knight's move relation to the capped stone.

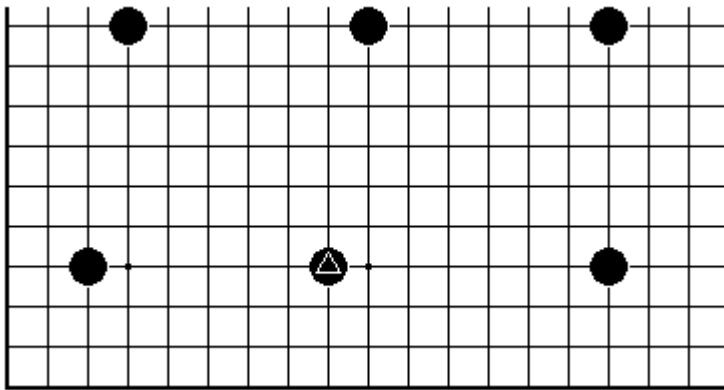
White 1 is a soft play. If White cannot afford to concede Black some territory, having played five times on the concealed half of the board, something has gone badly **wrong**. The main point is to avoid a bad quarter of an hour, as the French put it, trying to resuscitate an attempted invasion that intruded too deeply.



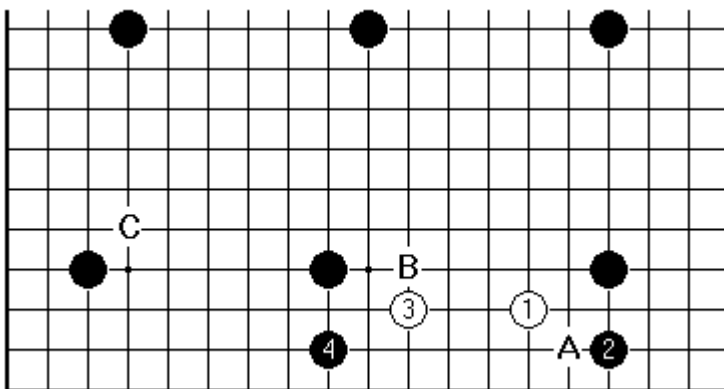
If Black answers on the right side, White seems not to have **trouble** making shape. If the order were changed to White 3, Black 4, White 1, Black's answer at 2 might look too passive.



Therefore White has the later chance to construct a small **live** group in the corner (the notorious tripod group). For the moment White has to consider how to develop from the triangled capping stone - the fishing expedition (technically a probe) in the corner has come up with something, so the appropriate way of thinking is to count in 50% of the gain. At present that can probably be matched elsewhere.

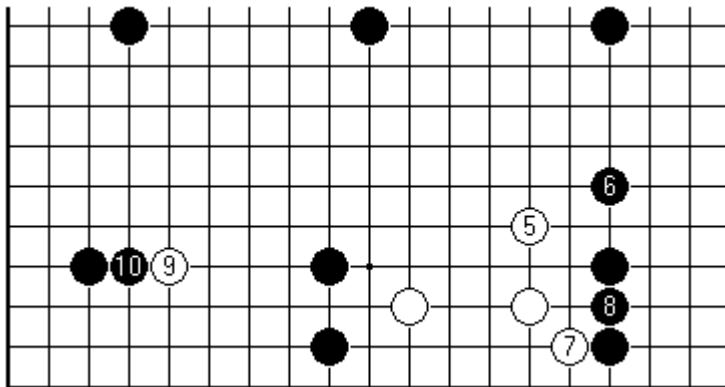


The use of the capping play against the low Chinese formation brings into **focus** an advantage of playing high (marked stone). This position is actually from one of my games at the 2000 World Amateur (Black was Jose Chacon 4 *dan* of Mexico). We had the benefit of professional commentary afterwards, from Sonoda Yuichi 9 *dan*.

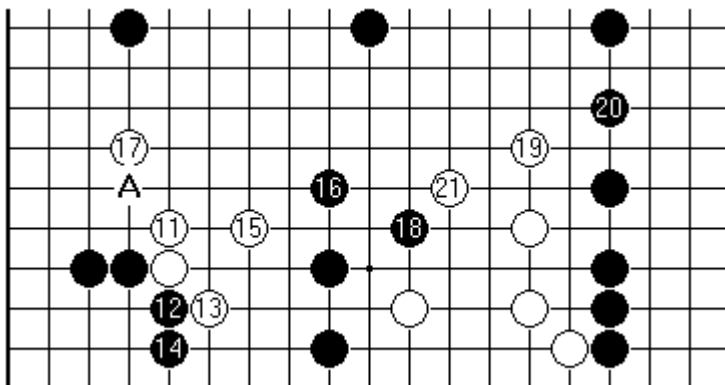


I came in at 1 - the logic is simply to start in the largest open **space**. Now common is Black A, White B. My opponent had his own ideas, and after 4 I was on my own.

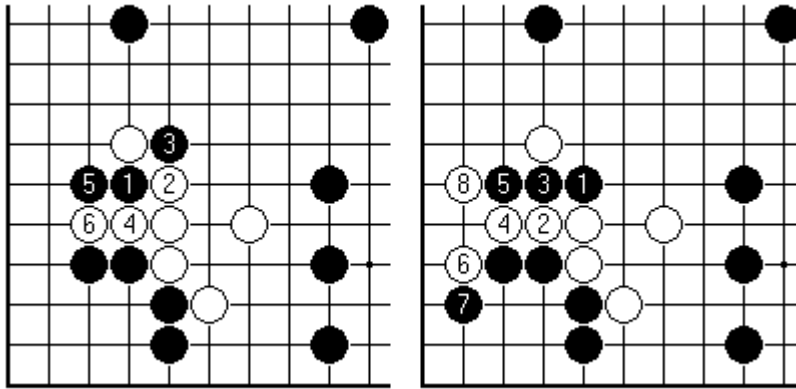
Sonoda's comment was that Black 4 could well be at C. Naturally that would allow White at 4, but is consistent with Black's emphasis on the centre.



Having done something for the group on the right with 5 and 7, I came in with 9. By professional **standards** this is an overplay. Black's answer at 10 is interesting, and Sonoda said he understood the thinking behind it. Now White will not be able to pull any stunts in the left-hand corner. The group started by 9 will have to put together some shape without access to the 3-3 point.



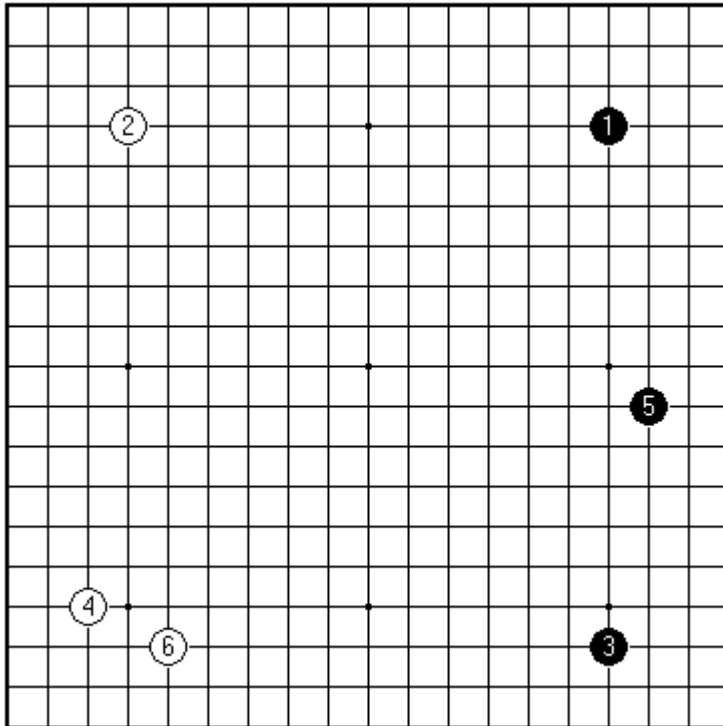
The consensus was that Black let himself down here with 12 (should be at A, a combination seen in pro Go). In a sense, if Black anyway wants to play 16 separating White, the chance also to connect along the edge to 14 is an **overlap** of effort. White 15 is ordinary good shape. White 17, however, is something a little bit special: a low-velocity shot that yet hits home hard. After it Black is short of a plan, and White has successfully erased the black framework, secure black territory having been cut back to the low end of the value of five net plays. The pro verdict was that Black's slacking off after the early base-stealing effort allowed White to claim a result here.



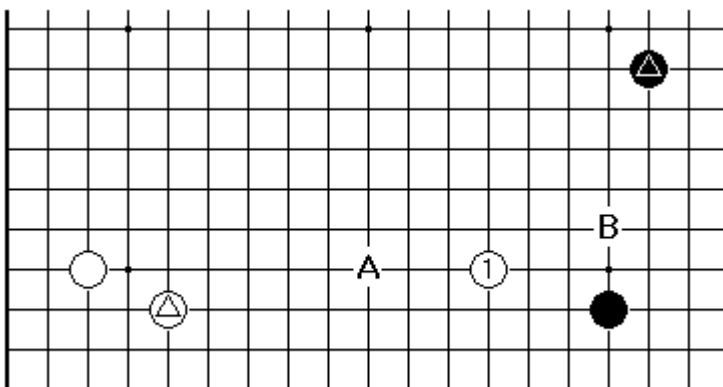
To clarify that point about White 17, another soft move in a **harsh** world, here are two parallel failed attempts by Black to cut off the white stone. In either case the black corner will suffer, or the cutting stones end up worse than useless. Black 12 and 14 of the previous diagram are potentially bad shape, so that Black shouldn't provoke such fights. What these variations actually prove is that White has resilient shape, so that any future black attack must be more carefully conceived.

14. The Anti-Chinese Plan

White can make initial plays that **devalue**, or at least cast a shadow on, Black's subsequent construction of a Chinese formation.

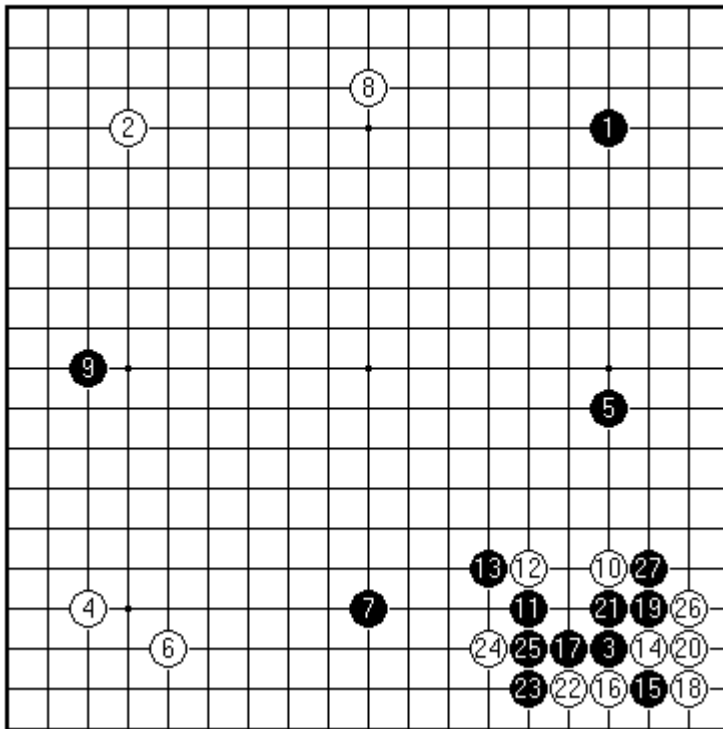


White 4 here should make Black pause for thought. White's enclosure with 6 is particularly well placed to **limit** the expansion of Black influence on the lower side.



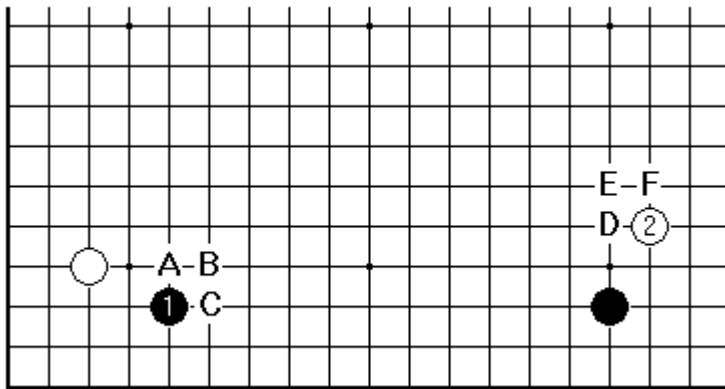
If for example White has the chance to play 1 here, creating what amounts to a pair of *miai* points at A and B (see the article "Chinese: Lower Side Plays"), the marked white stone will be well placed in **support** whichever Black chooses. From Black's point of view, however, only the answer at B works well with the marked black stone, allowing White A and a framework with good balance.

This reasoning is perhaps not conclusive. The idea that Black shouldn't play the Chinese against White's starting formation has been around for 25 years, and in professional play Black 5 is normally an approach in the lower left corner instead. A clear-cut condemnation of playing the Chinese in this position, as bad for Black, would step outside the professional **niceties**. I therefore consider myself fortunate to have had an explanation in terms from Sonoda 9 *dan* while I was in Japan.

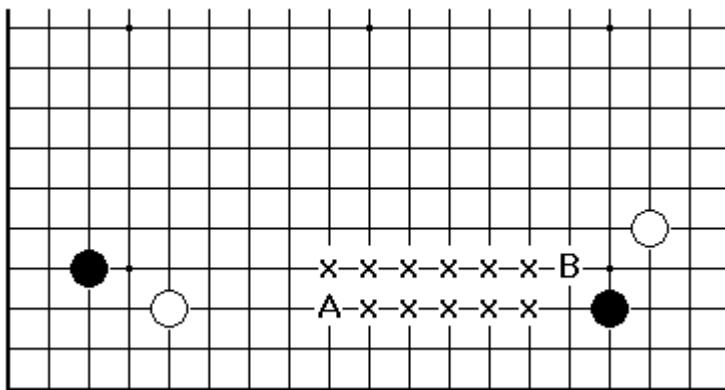


Sonoda-sensei showed me this variation, laid out in a few seconds. The lower right sequence has appeared already ("Staying Light"). The verdict was that in this position the white fortification in the lower left is really very well positioned, an **ideal** corner enclosure.

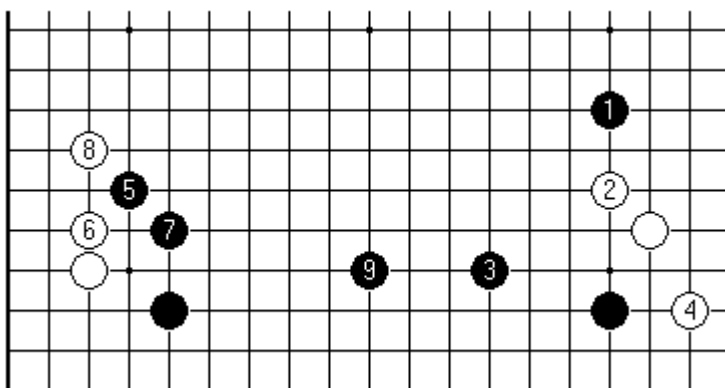
The reasoning can be placed as an issue of co-ordination. One may accept some poor co-ordination of one's own forces and compensate by fighting - this is an aspect of the openings that comes into play as you look further, for example at 5-3 points. For the opponent's forces to appear specially well co-ordinated is however always a **misfortune**.



Therefore there is a call to study sides of this kind, where Black 1 approaches White (possibly at A, B or C instead). White 2 (or one of D, E, F) is natural to **thwart** the Chinese formation, and in any case is a very big point. In a sense this type of position is more open to freedom of choice of variation than any seen so far. A huge range of corner openings could in principle appear.

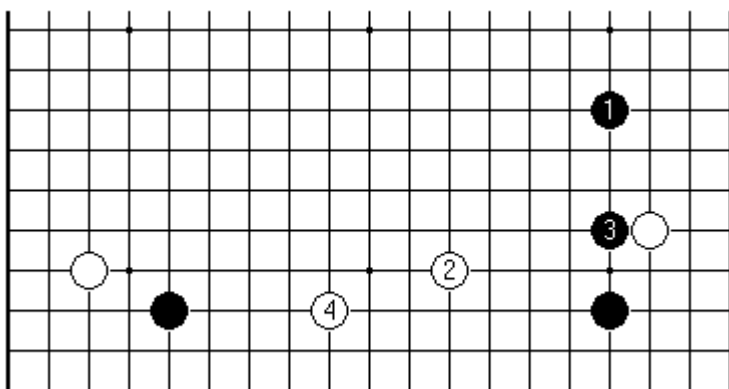


Our Anti-Chinese side bears a **superficial** resemblance to the celebrated Shusaku side shown here, in which the colours of the stones in the left-hand corner are interchanged. Features common to the two will naturally be shallow. In both cases the lettered points form a zone of potential double-purpose plays, which affect both corners. In the Shusaku case the points A and B (the famous Shusaku diagonal for Black) act as a pair of *miai* - if Black rushes to pincer at A, White can press Black down with B.

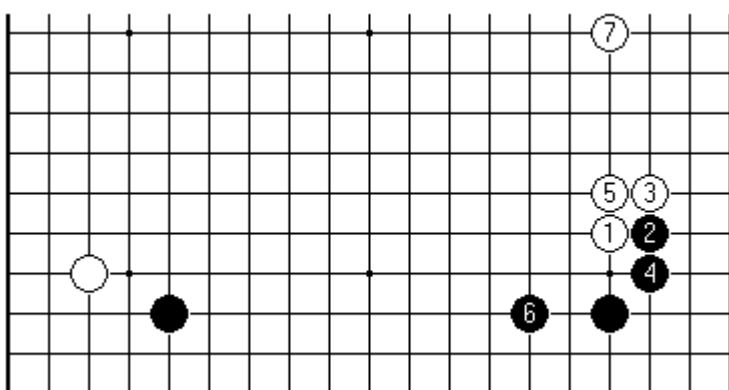


Back with the Anti-Chinese, thinking in terms of double-purpose plays can still lead to some fruitful ideas on **direction**, and hypothetical variations. Firstly Black applies a pincer in the right-hand corner, rather than playing directly in the 'zone'; this plan is adopted in the modern treatment of the Shusaku side too.

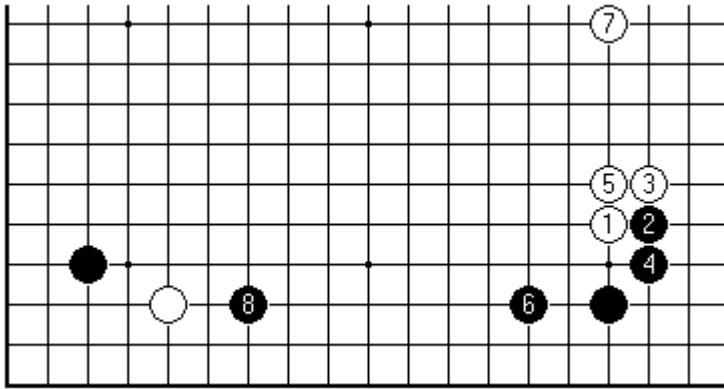
Assuming White plays it **safe** in choice of corner variation with 2 and then 6, Black can build a very satisfactory framework up to 9, establishing good co-ordination between the corners. Here White has been too passive.



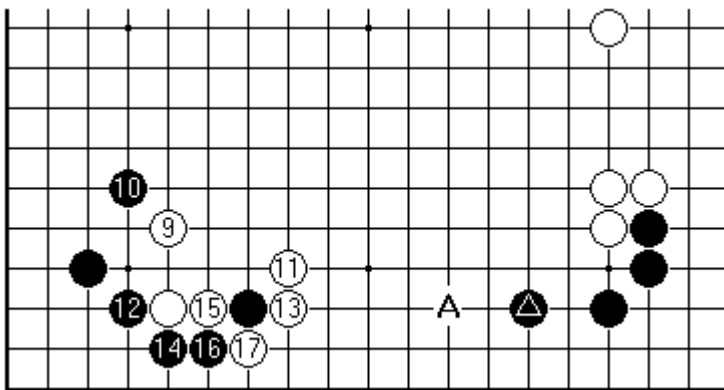
Therefore White often tries for **control** of the zone, like this, at the cost of giving up the right-hand corner.



That there are differences that count between the two side formations can be seen when we look at White approaching high in the right-hand corner. This is a normal plan in the Anti-Chinese case. It makes it easy for Black to play the common opening to 6. After that Black can take the initiative, probably playing in another part of the board. Seeking **rapid** development in that way is the style applied with such great success by Kobayashi Koichi, who held the Kisei title from 1986 to 1993. The point is that the lower side becomes an area in which White can't achieve so much. If Black wanted to create a framework there immediately, Black 6 would be played on the fourth line.



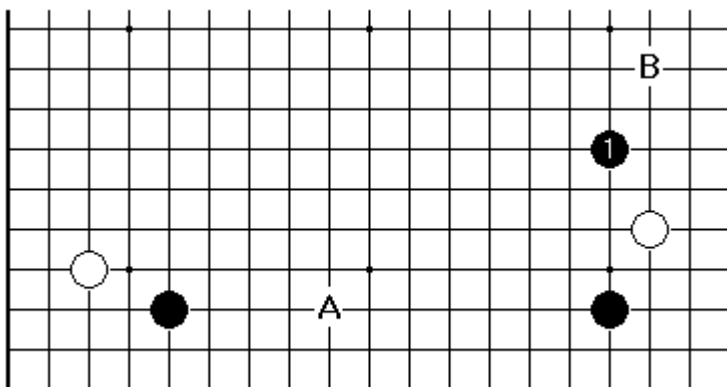
In contrast, the sort of Shusaku side formed with the high approach 1 here is a **rare** combination in pro play (the order in which White's approach plays are made is in fact usually the other way round, i.e. right corner then left corner, but may lead to the same position). The continuation up to 8 is excellent for Black.



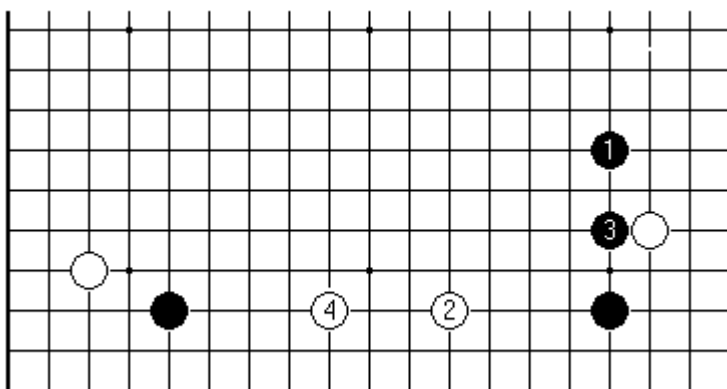
This is a normal way for the left-hand corner to be played out, but the result is poor for White. Black has taken territory in both corners and retained the initiative. A subsequent white play at A, towards the low, **solid** marked stone, has little enough effect on Black, who reaps the benefits here of superior co-ordination.

15. Anti-Chinese: One-Point High Pincer

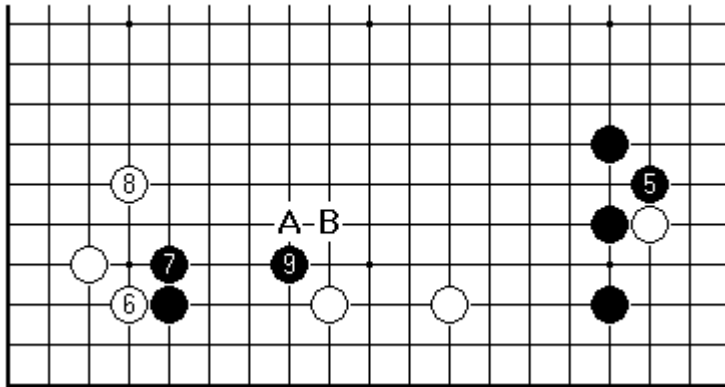
We'll look at further **concrete** variations from the position introduced last time.



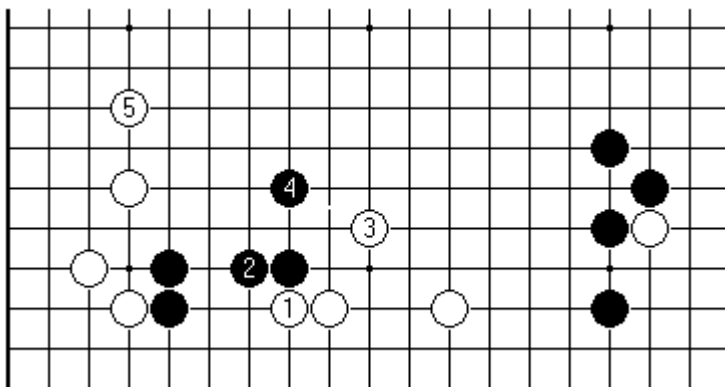
Here there are very many ways to play. Black will emphasise the right-hand corner. An exchange such as Black A, White B is very peaceful, but it seems that Black isn't trying to make anything out of first move advantage in playing that way. A pincer such as Black 1 is **natural**. The real difficulty of codifying opening theory in Go is illustrated by the variations here: I have come across three dozen, looking at Black and White playing once only, many of them in Chinese games. All of the regular pincers, plus the Shusaku diagonal, have been tried by Black. We'll follow just one line, worked out in the 1980s.



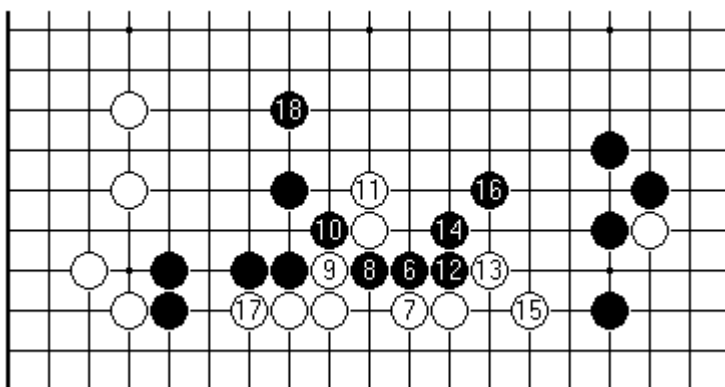
Since White's intention is usually to give up the right-hand corner with 2 and 4, Black's choice of pincer makes sense. White 4 is an ideal pincer, but Black 3 is very **severe**: it is unusual for White to ignore the pincer played as 1, because Black 3 is so good.



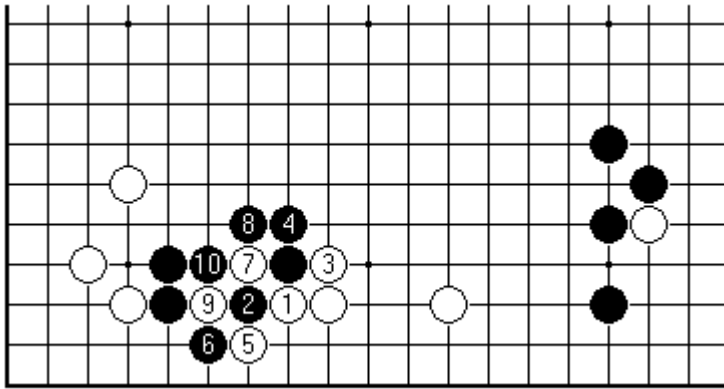
Now Black 5 to secure a large corner shows professional **attitude**. It is also known for Black to play in the left-hand corner at this point, to mitigate the coming attack. With 6 and 8 White makes Black a target. If Black 9 is at A, White can play B for good shape (Hirano 1p-Tei Meiki 2p Kisei 1984).



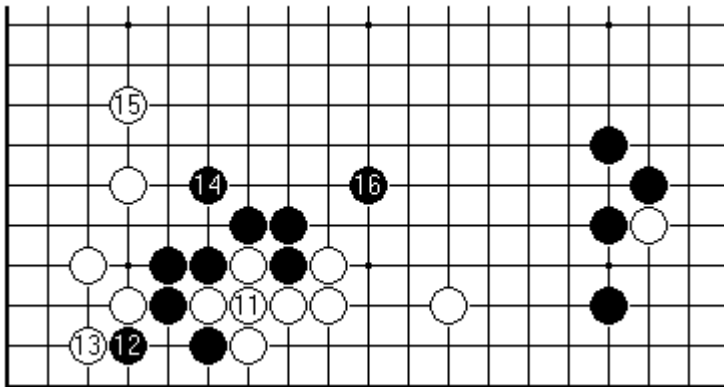
The game Shirashi 9p against Sakata 9p from the 1981 Honinbo League continued this way. White 5 guards against Black cutting across the knight's move below. The corners are now settled, while Black's group on the side lacks a **base**.



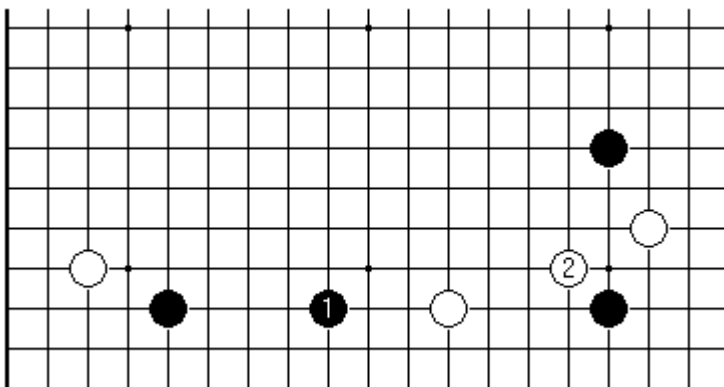
Now Black took advantage of the gap in White's shape, leading to the **cut** with 8 and 10. After 18 White ran out with the two stones in the centre, in Sakata style.



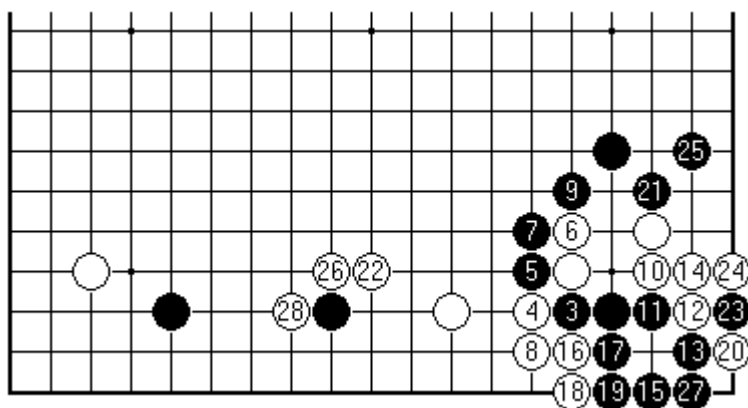
In an earlier game also involving Sakata (Black Rin 9p, 1981 JAA Cup) Black had **blocked** at 2.



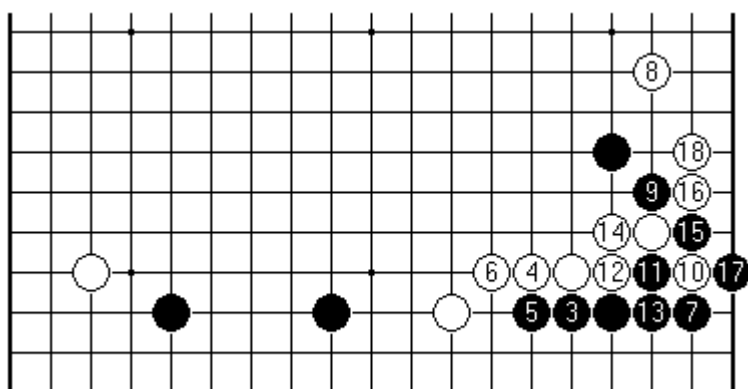
The **result** is certainly not bad for White.



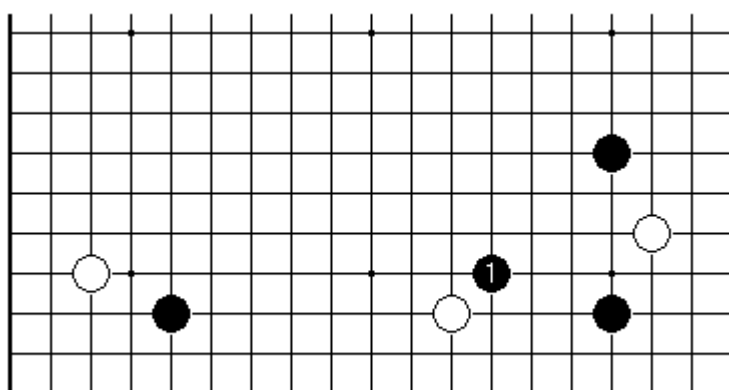
In a number of games Black has therefore reacted with 1, rather than submit to the exchange of advantages. This allows White a **free hand** to play 2. Now the question will be, is the black pincer stone well placed? If White builds influence that stone may look too close to it, if on the other hand a fight breaks out it might come in handy.



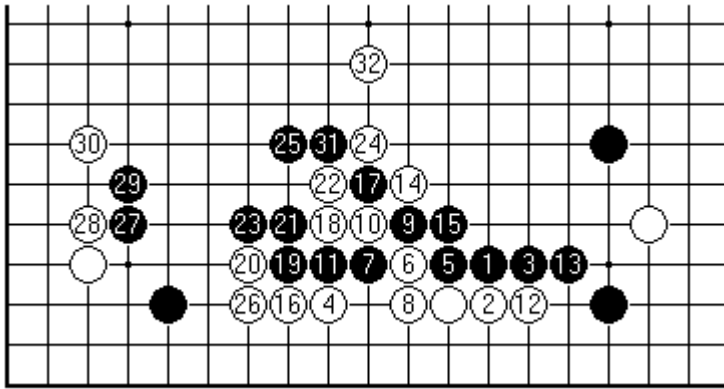
In this Chinese game from 1989 both White 4 and Black 5 are potentially **overplays**, and the fight in the corner became complicated with an implicit *ko* fight.



The following year in the Tianyuan tournament Cao Dayuan played the more orthodox White 4 to build **influence**. Black used tactics to make the corner very strong, but was left with weak stones on the outside.

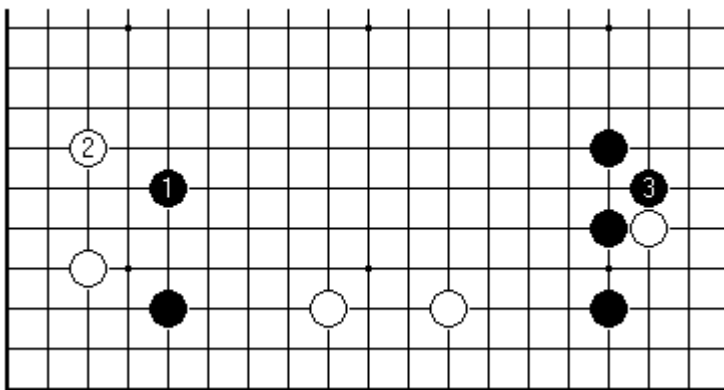


A final idea for Black came from top Korean Seo Pong-su. Black plays 1 to stir up an early **fight**. He tried this in games in 1990/1.

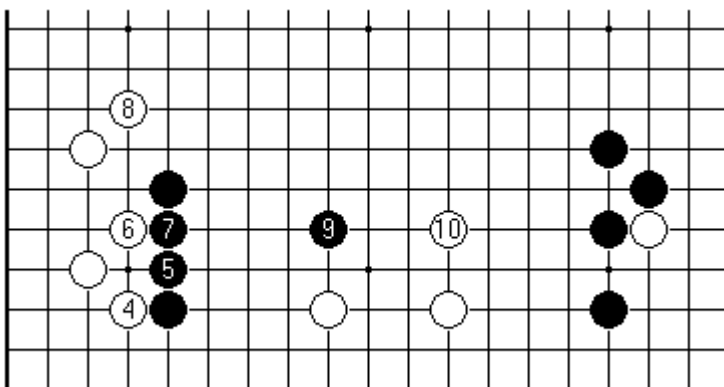


This is from the second outing, an international match against Cao Dayuan of China. (TV Asia Cup 1991). Black does **succeed** in the aim of making the lower side a fighting area. White however isn't obviously in trouble here (and went on to win).

While it is more than **rash** to draw conclusions in these matters, it does seem that Black ought seriously to consider helping the left-hand corner in this variation.

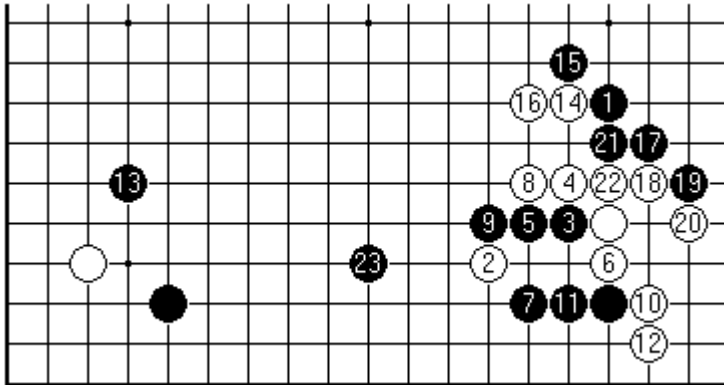


The objection to Black jumping out at 1 first before playing 3 is **presumably** that White takes territory, for which Black has no attacking compensation (because the white group on the side is very stable).

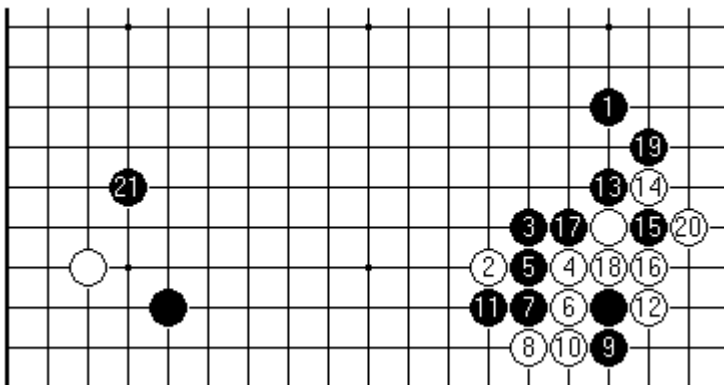


This is how it went in Cho Chikun - Sakata in the 1980 Kisei. Black 9 becomes possible, and then Black played elsewhere. This is in any case a plan with greater **dynamic** possibilities.

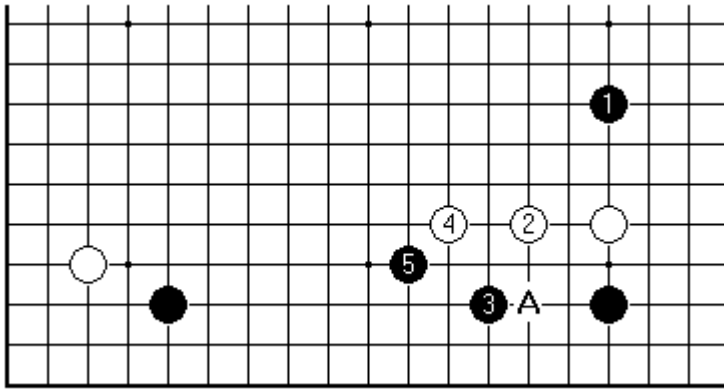
The sequence in the right-hand corner is the mainline variation. White is **settled**, so the question is how Black can develop from there. The lower and right sides typically become *miai* in a rather loose sense: Black could do with a play in both areas. Black 13 is the most powerful available play.



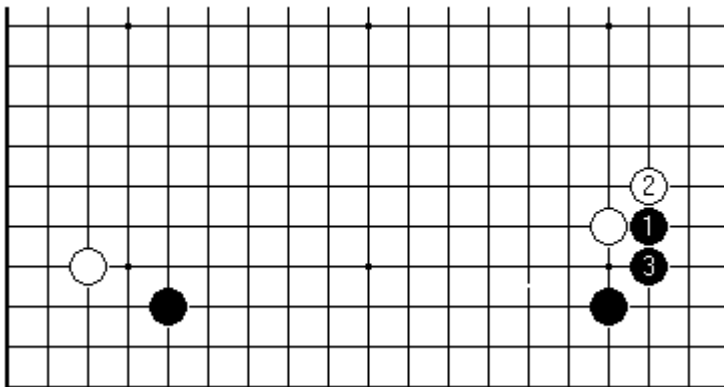
In June of that year Kobayashi Koichi played the same way against Cho Chikun in game 3 of the Honinbo match. Cho played 12 in the corner in the sharper, more territorial way. This variation leaves **moot** the cutting point at 22 (if Black cuts there a ladder arises). White 12 as shown does more to undermine Black's group on the lower side. This goes some way to explaining the sequel. White ignores 13, which one is normally advised not to do, and reinforces on the right. Black plays in hope of developing on both sides, coming back to 23. White then attacked on the right, leading to a close game.



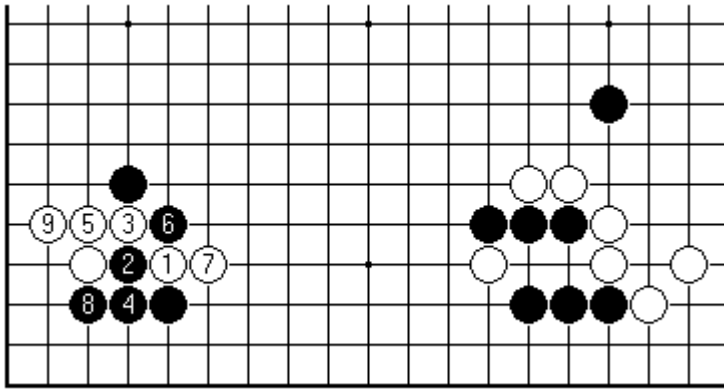
Then in July the Fujitsu international brought together Rin Kaiho and Kobayashi Koichi in the semi-final. Rin tried the influence-oriented play 3, an invention of Kajiware Takeo 9 *dan*, Kobayashi's old **preceptor** from the Kitani *dojo*. Complexities arise as Black seeks the best way to sacrifice two stones in the corner, but the framework plan up to 21 is evident.



After that this pattern seemed to be put to one side, and one can ask why. Analysis of Yang Yilun (Whole Board Thinking in Joseki vol.2) suggests that White 2 here is to be preferred. Simply jumping out with 2 and 4 has advantages if White intends to attack on the right side next. It is also more **respectful** of Black's potential framework on the lower side, avoiding being cut simply in order to play one line deeper. There is a more subtle point: Black should choose 3 rather than A, in order to get up to the fourth line with 5 for balance. This however leaves weaknesses that White may exploit in later fighting. (The plays 2 to 5 occurred in the same Fujitsu event in the third place playoff Kobayashi-Cho Hun-hyeon, but in a game where Black had a 3-4 point top right.)

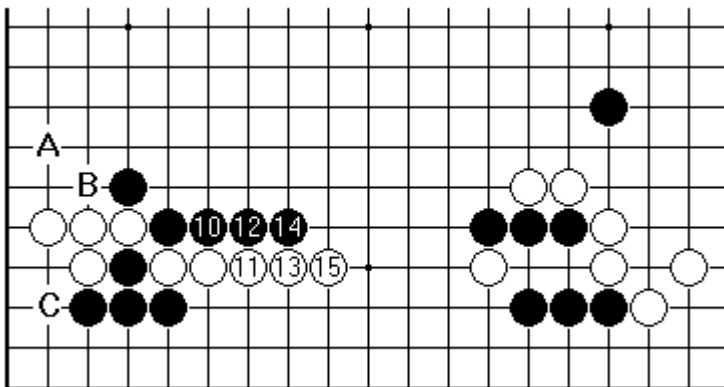


The orthodox inside contact play Black 1 here is back in fashion, anyway, being played by Chang Hao of China against Kudo Norio of Japan in the 1998 Tengen-Tianyuan international. This constitutes a victory of sorts for the Nihon Ki-in **steady** style.

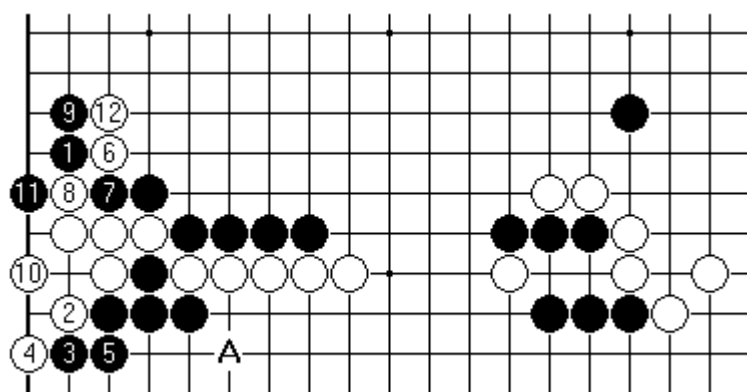


One would have to pour considerably more rain on the parade of a hungry young pro with a sharp position to analyse, to make it lose its savour. So, returning to the Wangwi game Cho-Seo that started it all, this was the continuation in the left-hand corner. We get a **lesser-known** version of the *taisha* (great slope): White must contest Black's framework plan, so 1 seems compulsory. Then 5 at 6 would simplify matters - but the requisite ladder is broken by Black's stone top right, so it's into the main tangle of variations. The *taisha* is called the '*joseki* of 1000 lines', and there is really no need to brand that as hyperbole.

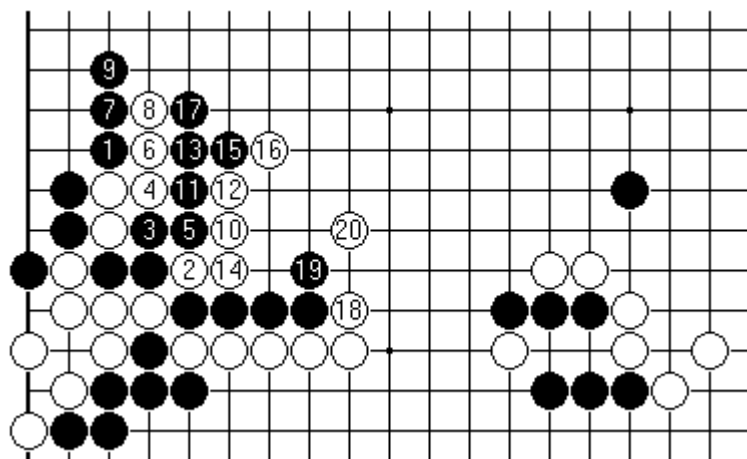
White 9 has the meaning that White will try to live quickly on the edge. The best way White can currently help 1 and 7, swimming in Black influence, is to reduce the **impact** of double-purpose plays near Black 6.



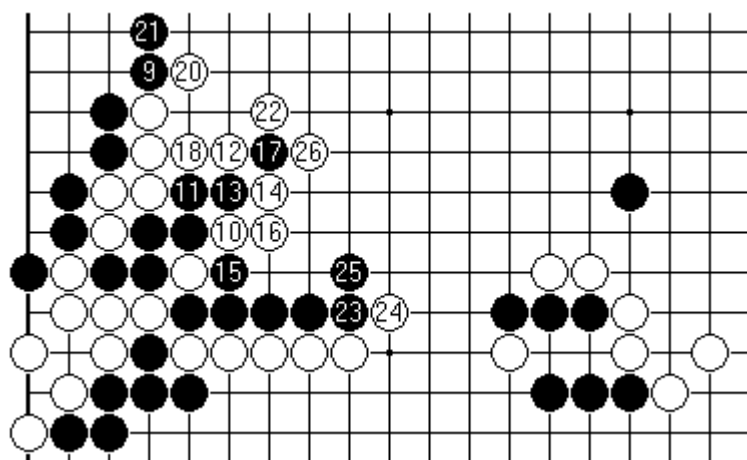
Pushing along with 10, 12, 14 is a typical Black option. Now A is the interesting **Ch'ung Am** concept, Black B is the actual game, with White surviving. Anyone can see that C is a key point for the eye shape of both, but here it is too slow for Black.



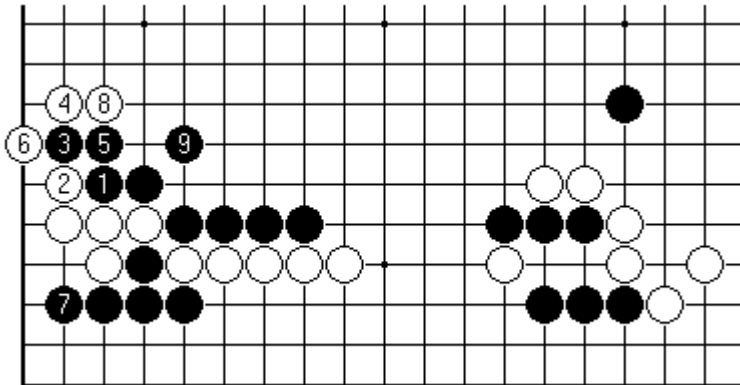
There is little choice once White is shut in. Up to 12 White doesn't have **time** to fight a capturing race with Black by playing at A. Prospects must be sought on the outside. This is a an ultra-hard case of what I called a 'skin fight' in *Teach Yourself Go*.



This is a typical variation. Black 1 and 9 are natural plays, but the position is radically **unstable**. Black 11 is a way to avoid being squeezed into bad shape (which would make White 18 ever more powerful); but ends in failure as White 20 nets the key stones. Backtracking, it seems that Black 9 is at fault.



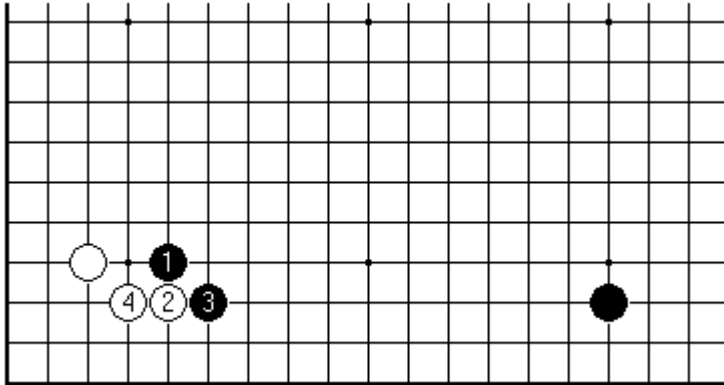
This is given as an alternate, tight-rope walking continuation (19 connects). The number of unresolved issues of life-and-death on the lower side is **growing** by the minute.



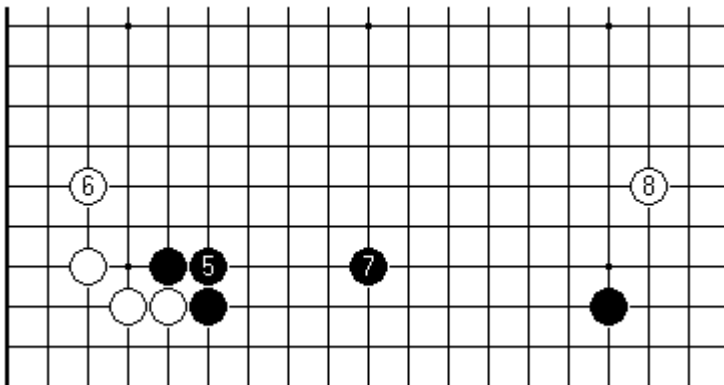
With that rather considerable burden to be borne in mind, the game continuation by Black might be thought to have **compromised** in the direction of practicality. With 1 and 3 Black gave White the option to sneak out with 4 and 6; by playing 3 before 1 Black would have forced White into cutting at 5 instead. Hindsight is of course a great leveller.

17. Boldly Enclosing

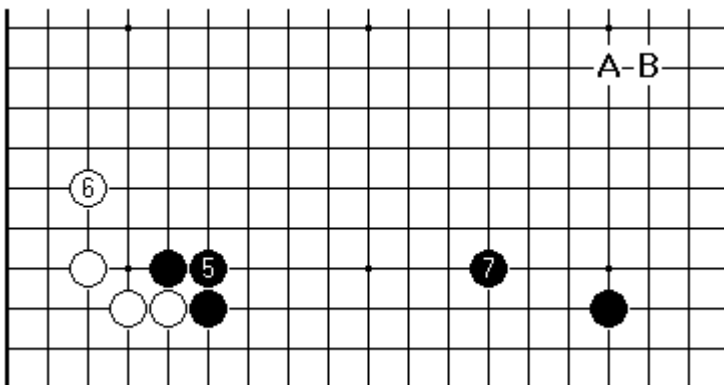
Another path in the Anti-Chinese opens up when Black makes a high approach. White can take the opportunity to **play out** the corner, instead of making a corresponding approach on the right.



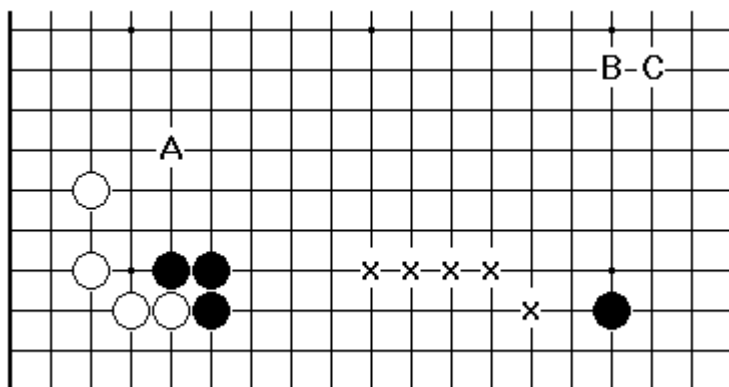
So far so good for White. There are now a number of ways in which Black can try to develop this side as a **whole**.



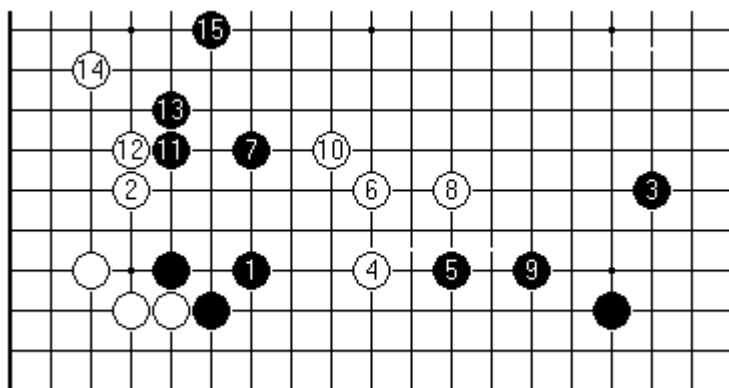
Completing the corner opening this way, with Black 7 played high for balance, is an orthodox idea for Black, giving rise to a position similar in **spirit** to the Kobayashi Koichi formation mentioned earlier. Now White 8 is usual, played one line more distant from the corner to avoid severe pincers.



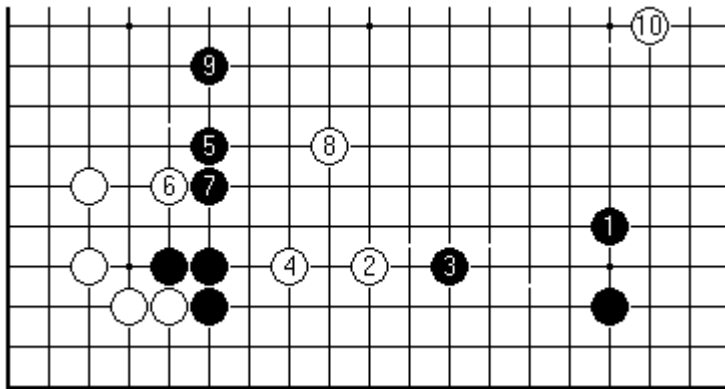
Black 7 here make look curious, but it's another **orthodox** continuation. Black is anticipating a Chinese enclosure next at A or B, after which the whole framework will look well organised. Therefore White's natural idea is a wedge play at or near B. The positioning of Black 7 affects the corner - White wants to keep a safe distance, Black takes care not to become overconcentrated there. Early fighting on the lower side may be postponed while White gives priority to moves on the right.



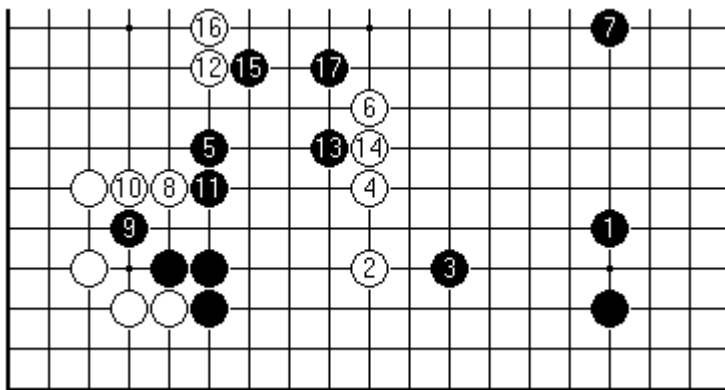
Other plays here include A (Fujisawa Shuko v. Kobayashi Koichi in the 1987 Meijin League), and Chinese enclosures at B and C. These all leave very **open** positions, in which White has a choice of invasion points such as those marked by 'x'. Clearly White would like to target the Black stones to the left, but since they can run out to A in reasonable shape there is no one obvious plan, and White would also like to control the growth of Black's right-hand corner territory.



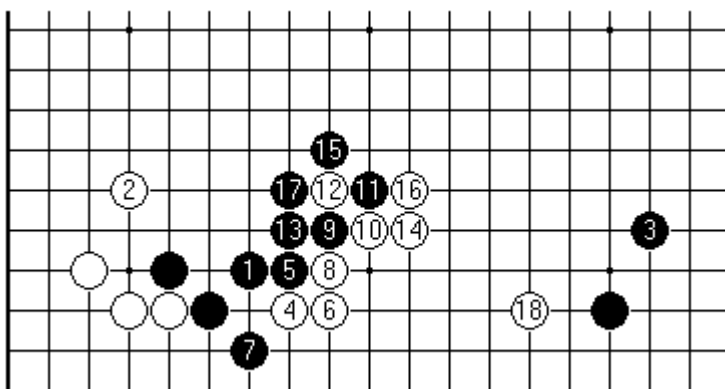
A different tack is to use the hanging connection 1 and enclose with 3. In this **Chinese** game from 1987 Nie Weiping as White made the light invasion at 4. Both players acquire some territory, and a weak group to mind.



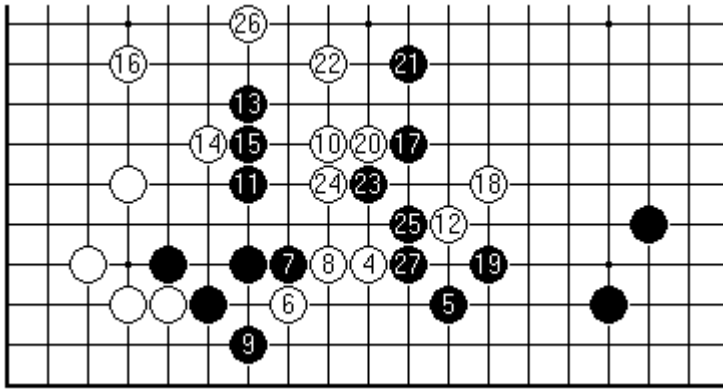
A few weeks before in the Tengen in **Japan** a game Ishigure-Awaji had gone like this.



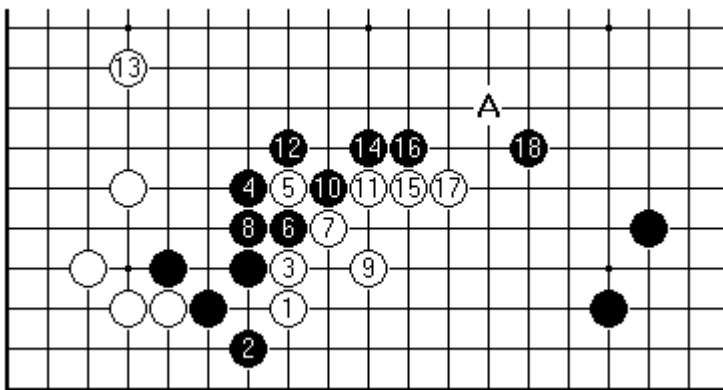
Shortly after those games appeared this one (Fujisawa Shuko-Rin Kaiho in the Oza). A new pattern of fighting was emerging in which Black switched away from the left and changed horses in mid-stream, enclosing the right-hand corner **conventionally** rather than persisting with the Chinese style.



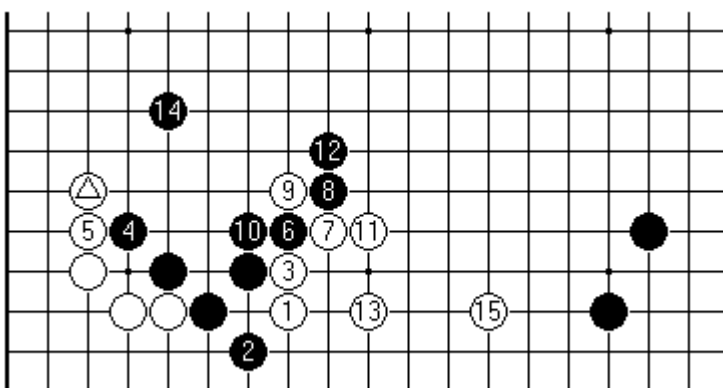
This idea reached centre stage when Kato Masao played it against Kobayashi Koichi in game 3 of the Kisei match early in 1988. Black 3, the **tightest** ordinary enclosure, makes sense if Black is going to push the fighting rightwards with 9 and 11. Go World 53 comments that 4 is better than the wedge halfway between 4 and 18.



Later that year the pattern was fought over again (Hashimoto Shoji-Rin Kaiho in the Judan), turning into a sharp early **dispute** over shape. A close game ensued.

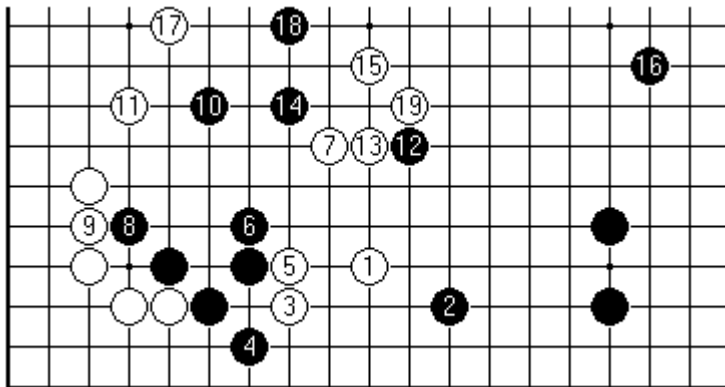


Back again in a top match in 1989, this happened in Game 2 of the Meijin final Awaji Shuzo-Kobayashi Koichi. A pushing battle developed as Black **allowed** White to play 3. (Locally speaking 18 should be A instead - commentary in Go World 58). Often a trial in one of the high-profile series of two-day games settles the theory of a pattern, on the board or in analysis afterwards. There are a couple more games to report from 1991.



This is from the Chinese promotion tournament, with the marked white stone played conventionally on the third line for **solidity**. Another game Hashimoto-Goto in the

Gosei reprised the Kato-Kobayashi opening, which might therefore have become definitive.

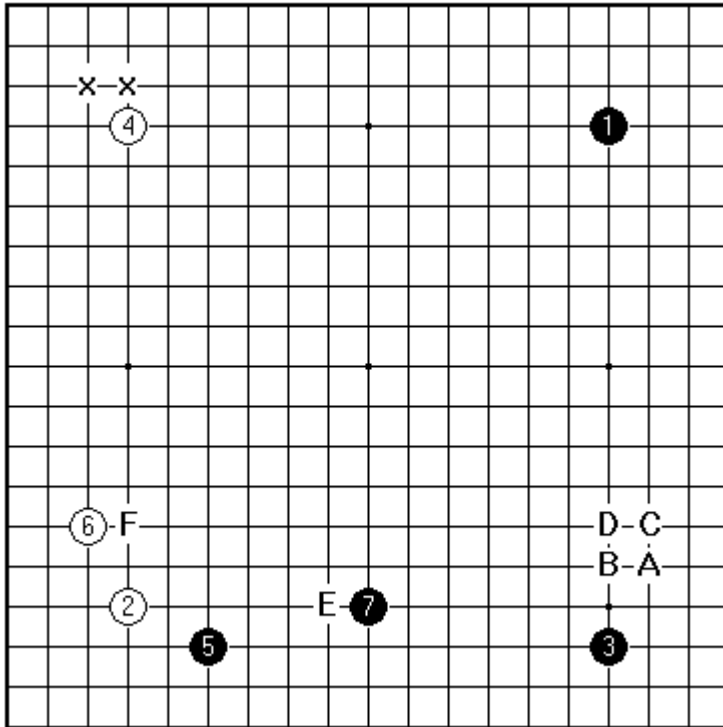


I have a **personal** interest in this side pattern, having reached it as Black in Game 2 of my [British Championship match in 1997](#) against Matthew Macfadyen. This is how it went, the setting being indeed not an Anti-Chinese but a much rarer diagonal opening. Our amateur fighting is given without comment, beyond saying mistakes later in the game were much more heinous. Matthew's predilection is for database-busting obscure patterns, and so my good start in this game was a minor victory for side-based thinking.

Summing up on the Anti-Chinese, it has become a mainstream opening encompassing many **distinctive** ideas. Since the Kisei match in 1978, when Black's stubborn plan of continuing with the Chinese as normal was championed unsuccessfully by Kato Masao in the most public possible arena against the brilliance of Fujisawa Shuko, the Anti-Chinese has looked like a very useful way for White to counter Black's first line of thinking.

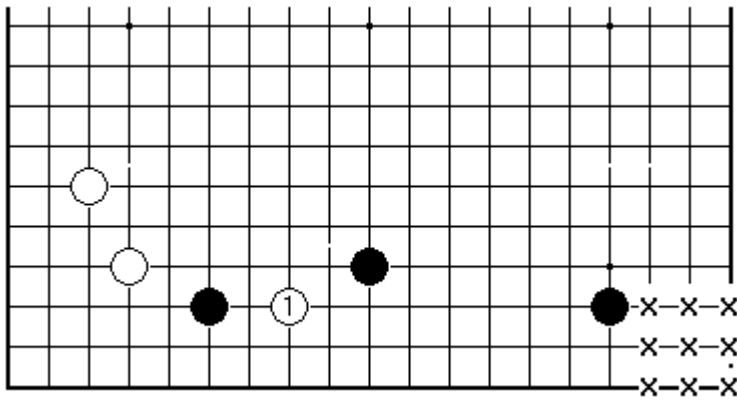
18. Kobayashi's Formation

The Chinese formation doesn't suit everyone's Go temperament. An important development was the **vigorous** style that has Kobayashi Koichi's name attached to it.



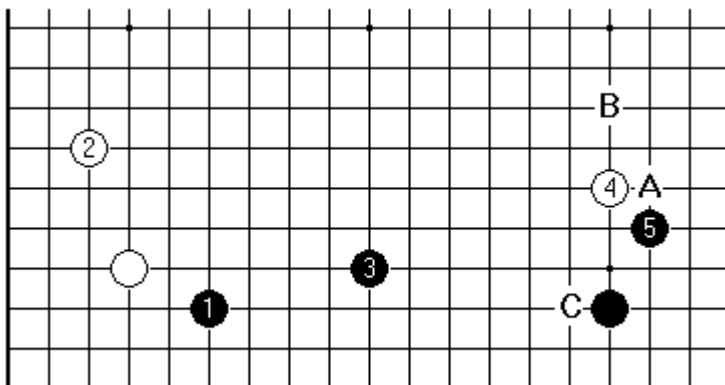
Black spreads out along the lower side, assuming a White 4-4 point in the lower left corner. After that a black enclosure such as A becomes ideal, and it is therefore natural for White 8 to **contest** the lower right. A serious theoretical debate raged over the best point (out of A, B, C, D) during the 1980s. Now C is the standard play, while D is still seen, in line with the '21st century' style promulgated in a best-selling book by Go Seigen.

In fact there is a **cluster** of openings here. In increasing order of relevance to the lower right corner: White might have occupied the upper left at one of the 'x' points; White 6 might be at F; Black 7 might be at E. This complex was seen in a string of top matches in the 1980s, often but not always involving Kobayashi. His brand name attached to the formation can have done it no harm at all, since he was at his most impressive in the same period. (The 'later' Kobayashi style is Black 5 at A, leaving an obvious big point around 7 that White is normally quick to take.)

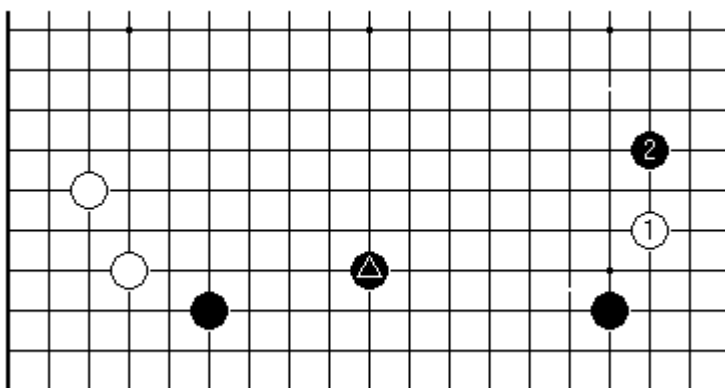


From a theoretical stance, the 'x' points of eye space in the right-hand corner have an important role in stabilising the black framework across the side. White can invade at 1. How hard Black can fight back is conditioned by the state of the longer extension to the right. That in turn is affected by how well the right-hand corner is **anchored**.

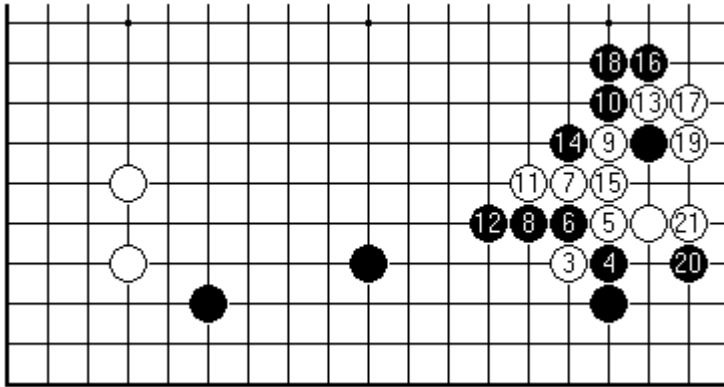
Therefore how close White can approach the right-hand corner may be seen as a **crux**. The popularity of the Kobayashi formation rests on the conclusion that White does best to play with restraint there.



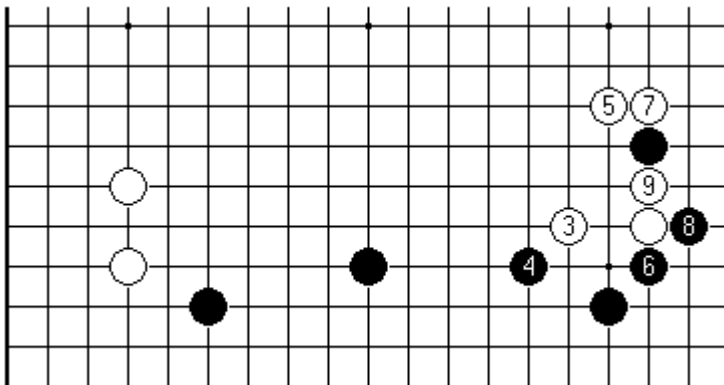
An early game with the pattern (Rin-Shimamura Kisei 1978) went like this. White now played away, with Black A White B coming later. This is a **light** way to play, aiming at White C.



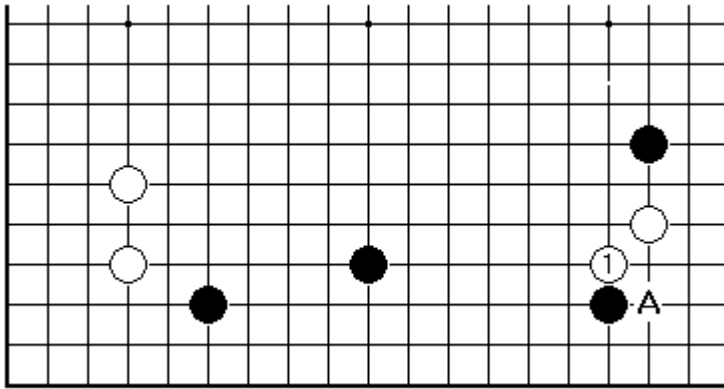
It is perhaps in line with professional instincts to consider first the low approach White 1 here. When White is most concerned with immediate life, recourse to this play is natural. Because of the presence of the marked black stone, Black looks to play the **tightest** pincer at 2. White's choice of variation is now constrained: many of the standard 'book' lines will run into trouble as the fighting spreads. Calling the tune for the opponent and trying for maximum plays were two of the traits in the Kobayashi style that propelled him to the top.



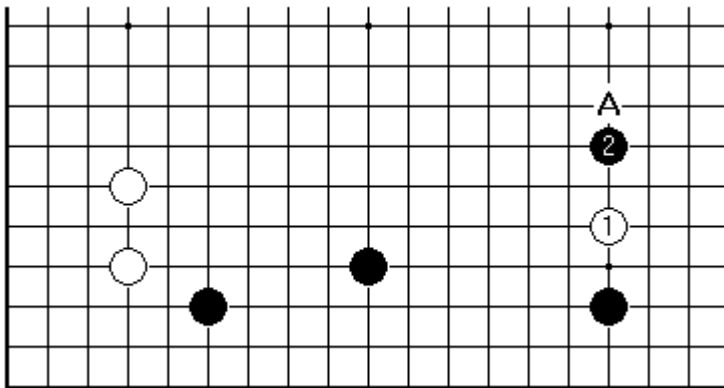
This is how it went in Kobayashi-Takemiya from the 1980 Honinbo League (which Takemiya **won**).



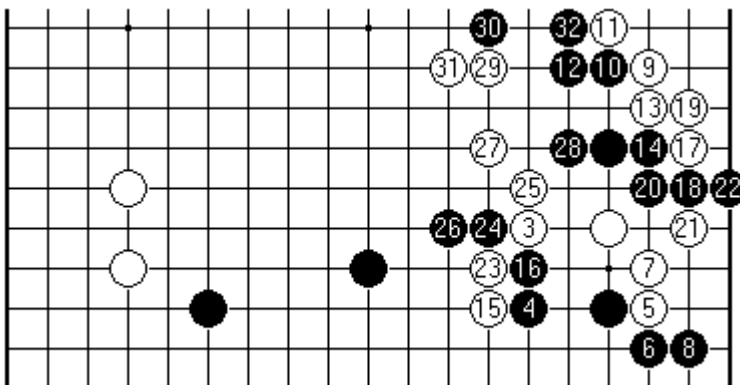
In 1982 in the deciding fifth game of the Tengen match it was Kataoka-Kato, and the **typical** corner-taking plays Black 6 and 8 were seen. Black takes the initiative here as well as territory. This variation seems more than adequate for Black. (Kataoka won the game by half a point.)



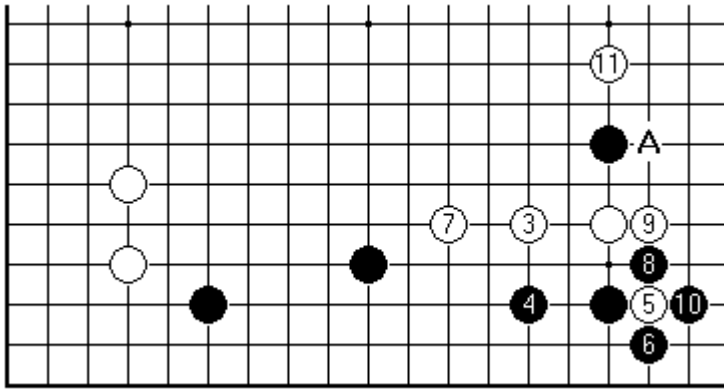
According to Yang Yilun (Whole Board Thinking in Joseki vol.1), White 1 here is **correct** in this type of position, because Black A in answer to deny White the corner is a doubtful play.



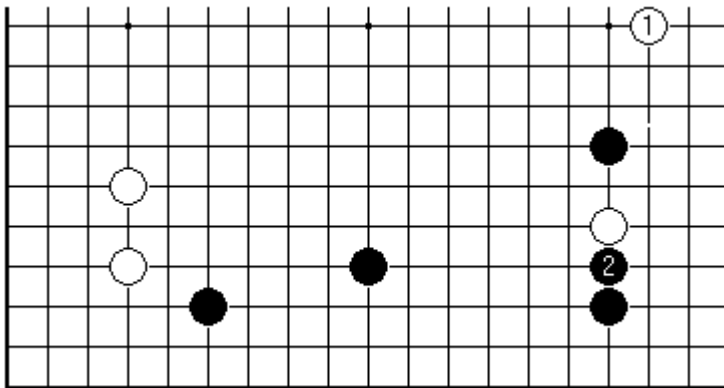
From the perspective of amateur Go, the high approach White 1 here is common. In early games of Cho Chikun the **severe** pincer at Black 2 was played. Theoretical attention has also been given to the Magic Sword pincer at A. (Black 2 was once known as the Magic Dirk, by the way, at least by British players.)



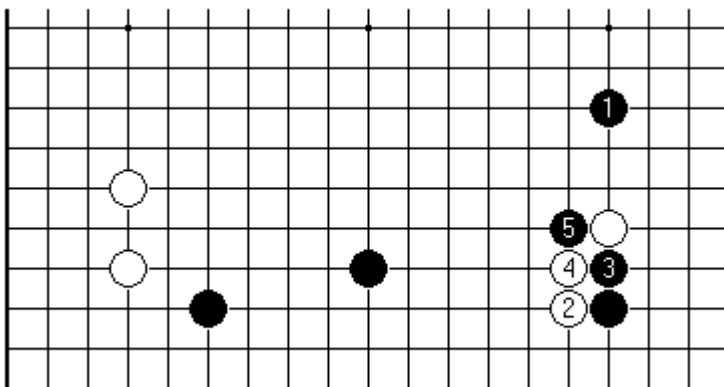
This is Cho-Otake from the 1981 Kakusei, with a big fight starting as White **refuses** the quiet option of 5 at 26.



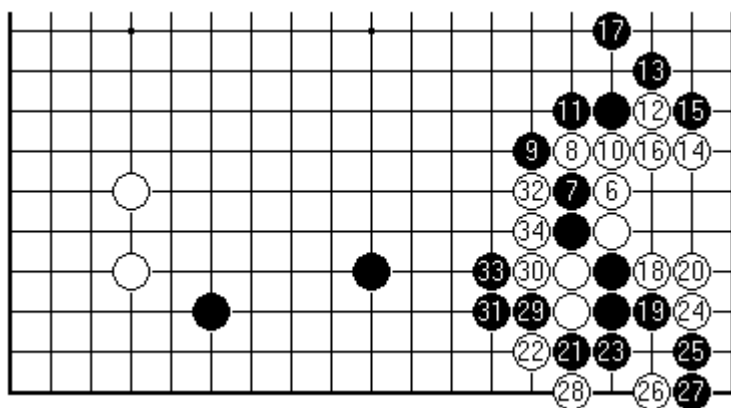
Later that year in Cho-Shiraishi (Honinbo League) it was more peaceful since Black considered it **good enough** to allow White to connect under later at A. (The meaning of White 5 is to prevent a counter-strike with Black at 9, minimising the loss if Black gives up the pincer stone.)



In a Chinese game from 1985 White played 1 here to take up position on the right side, whereupon Black (Cao Dayuan) took the corner with the **solid** butting play 2.



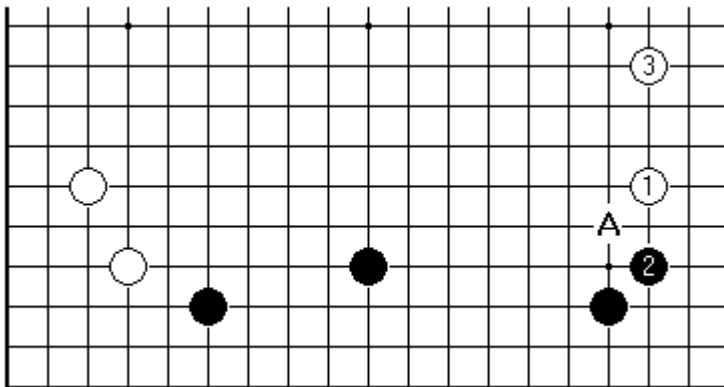
If Black plays the Magic Sword, White has a much broader range of variation. White 2 here is the most **hair-raising** choice. Chinese star Yu Bin played both sides of this line in 1996.



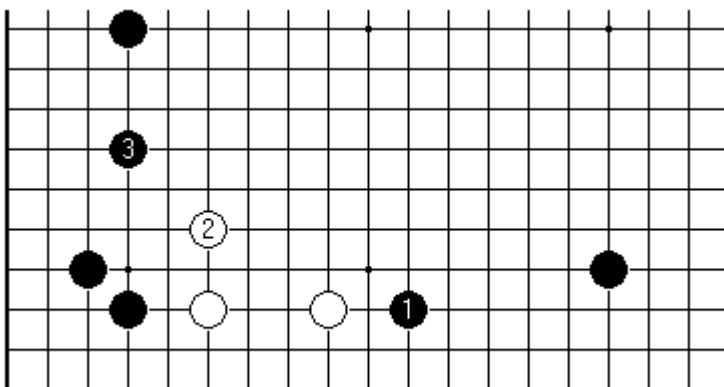
When he held Black it went this way, with Black taking influence and sacrificially **rescuing** the corner. More analysis is in the books of Yang Yilun and Go Seigen, but that is surely not yet definitive.

19. Kobayashi: Distal Approach

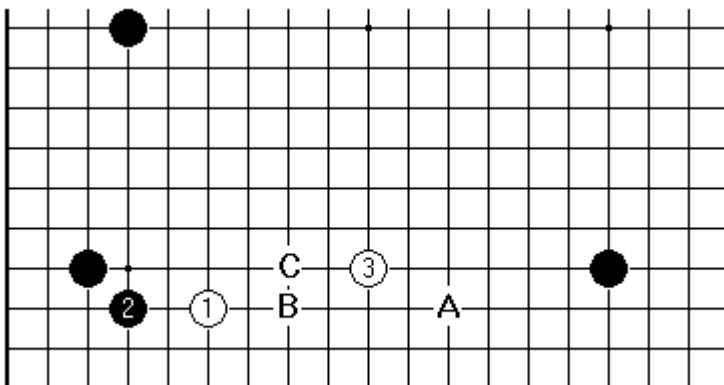
Nowadays the most orthodox way for White to deal with the Kobayashi formation is to play the **restrained**, two-point low approach (large knight's move approach). A steady accumulation of theory attaches to this play.



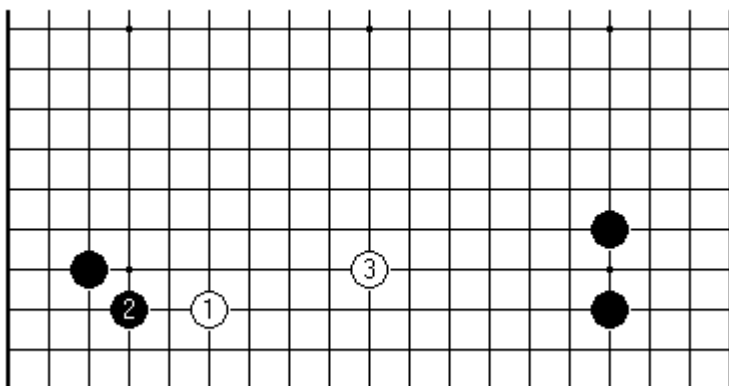
If Black simply takes the corner with 2, White is free to play at 3, which is certainly a **reasonable** plan. Black has another popular choice at A, with a more direct eye on building up the lower side framework.



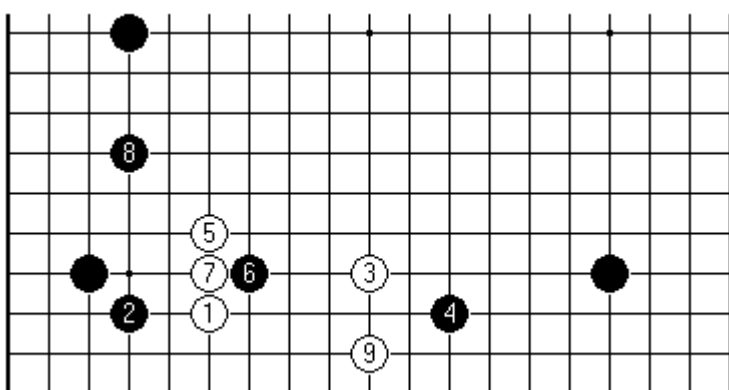
Black can continue with 1 here, immediately or in the near future. Then 2 becomes the **key point** - if White doesn't occupy it, Black can play at 2 for an excellent attack that builds up the framework.



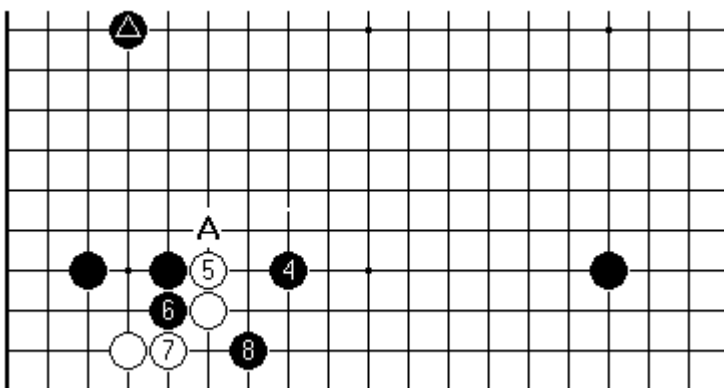
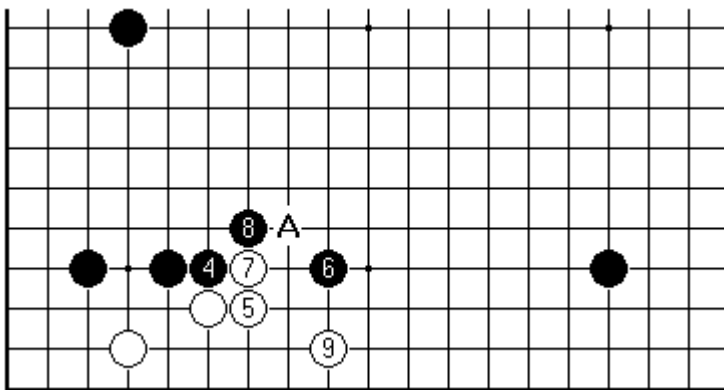
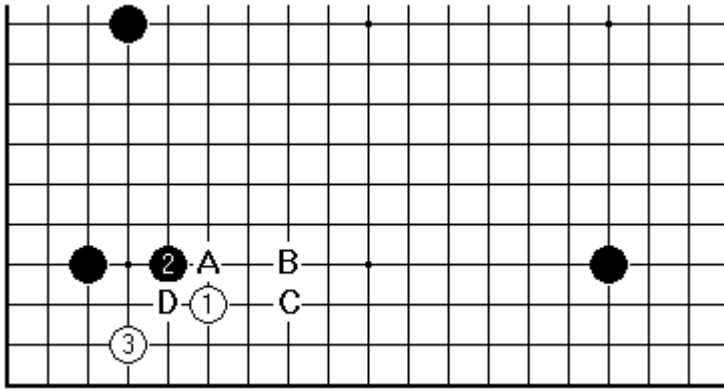
Extending back as far as 3 was played by Cho Chikun (game 2 of the 1986 Kisei match) against Kobayashi Koichi himself. Not in fact a new move, it had appeared in the Shinjin-O match 18 months before. It is rather **natural** for Black to answer at A, but B and C have been tried more recently.



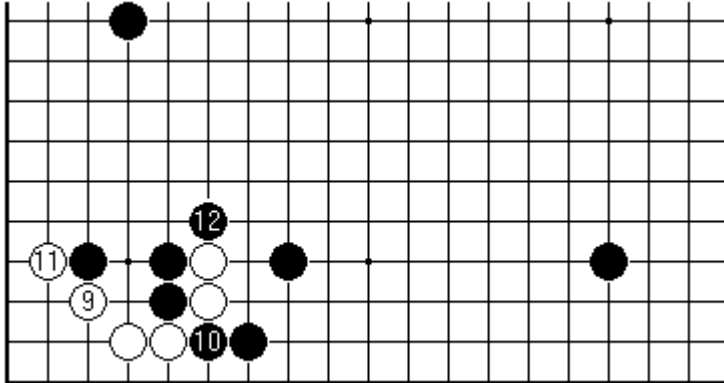
As long ago as 1949 Go Seigen had tried extending back to 3 this way in a game against Sugiuchi. There is however a **puzzle** about this shape. It is not an idea that would occur to anyone adhering to what you could call the infantryman's theory: that groups established inside an opponent's large-scale framework have a first duty to hold a piece of ground. According to that logic, extending on the third line would be correct.



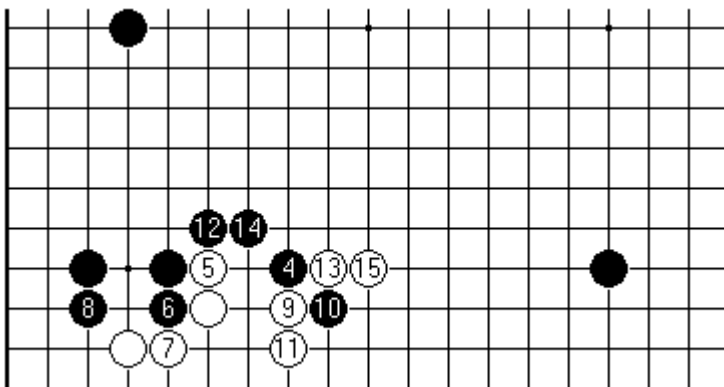
The new book *Jungsuk in Our Time* from the Korean Baduk Association addresses the variation, giving this line. The comment, that 3 is more modern and centre-oriented, is a little **throwaway**. White is certainly aiming at 5, building influence while setting up an invasion of Black's framework. The idea behind Black 6 is to retain the initiative - i.e. to prevent White dealing lightly with this side and moving elsewhere. It is argued that White 9 becomes required. In any case White 3 invites some complex developments.



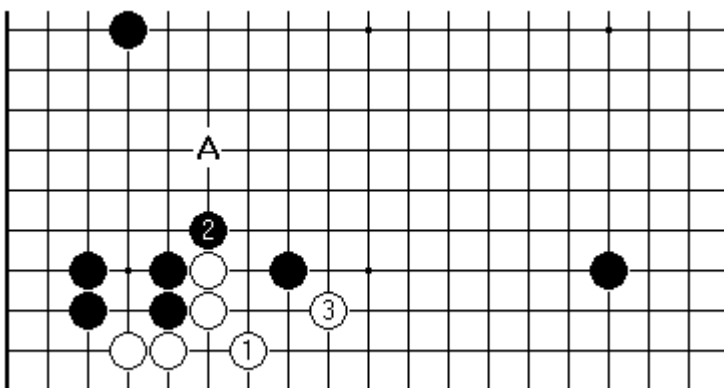
Black 4 here can be seen as an allied idea, but with more emphasis on attack. There is a complex textbook sequence starting with 6 at A, but it has fallen into **disrepute** in this position, the reason being that the marked black stone can end up less than ideally placed. So now the tough-minded plan of Black 6 is standard. What about the immediate peep Black 8?



In a game Rin Kaiho-Ryu Shikun (Tengen match 1996 game 2) White resisted, **trading** the outside for points in the corner. This sort of result may be hard to evaluate. There is the chance that Black's other stones will look misconceived.



Therefore it is usual for Black to defend with 8. This gives White a chance to **guard** against the peep on the second line. This variation has been seen more than once.

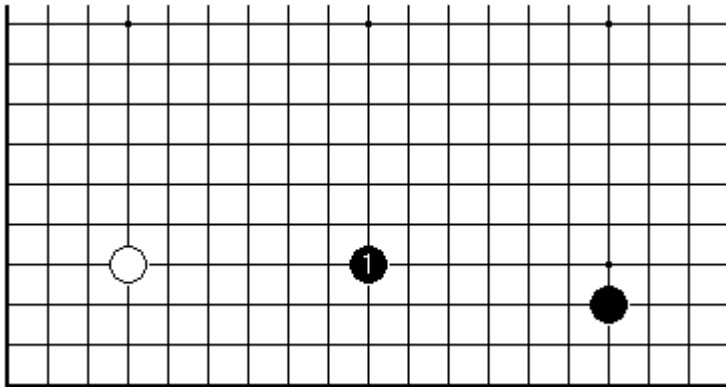


An alternative is this idea of Ma Xiaochun. White played **calmly** with 1 and 3, then shortly afterwards invaded at A.

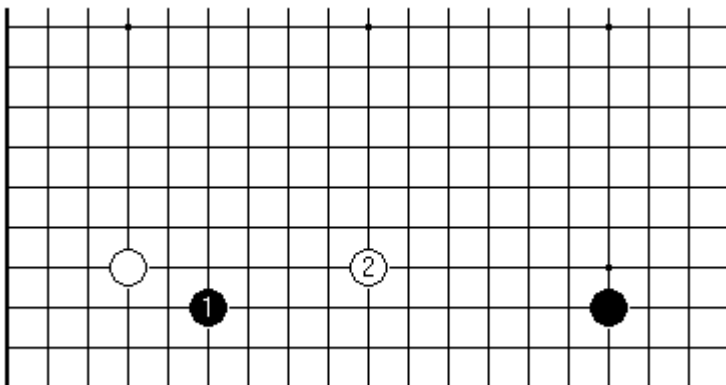
More ideas on this set of variations in Chapter 10 of the **new** book *The World of Chinese Go* by Guo Juan (Kiseido).

20. Takagi's Extension

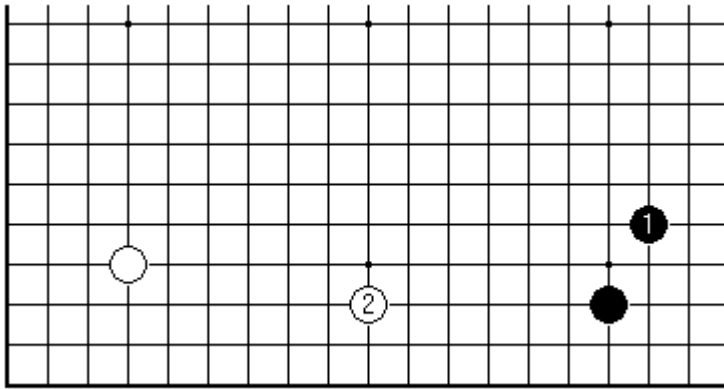
Takagi Shoichi 9 *dan* is one of the most **admired** stylists amongst Japanese professionals. In 1986 he started playing a variation on the Kobayashi formation, in which Black extends immediately to the middle of the side.



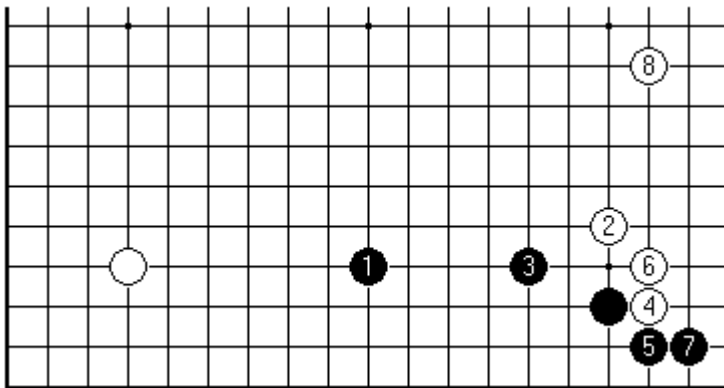
This is an unorthodox idea, but had enough **advantages** for it to be taken up at the time, appearing in two big matches (1986 Honinbo final game 3 Yamashiro-Takemiya, 1989 Kisei final game 3 Kobayashi-Takemiya). In recent years this is being played once more, in China.



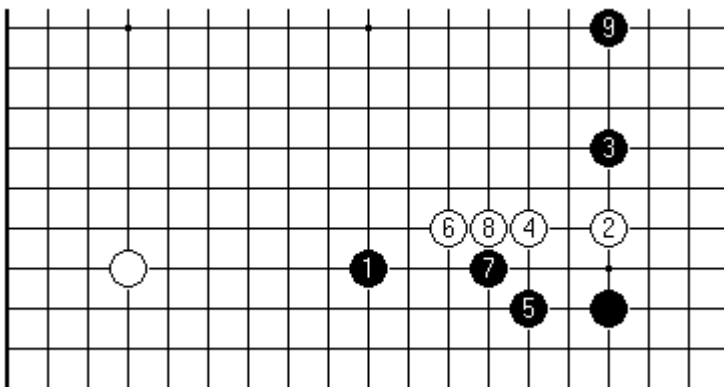
In the case of Takemiya's opponents, the thought may well have been to **avoid** the pincer 2. Now if Black invades the left corner at the 3-3 point, White can start building a large-scale framework. Therefore choosing the immediate extension can be seen as a way of retaining strategic control.



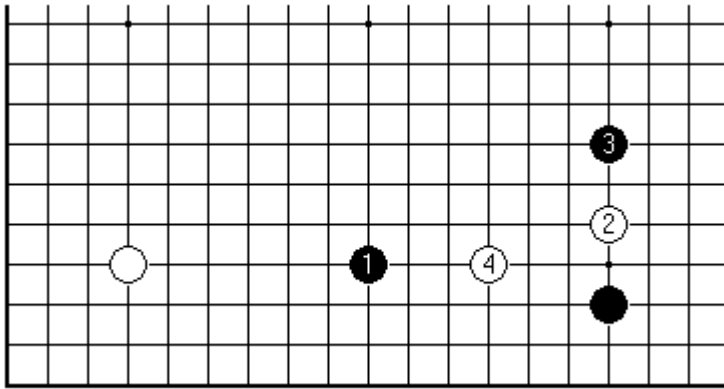
The textbooks have always **disapproved**. The corner enclosure 1 is supposed to be a bigger point than the extension to 2. Of course much of modern Go theory is based on disregarding this principle.



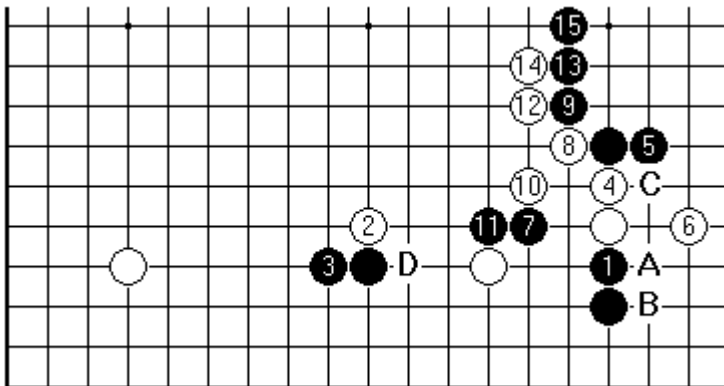
What is true is that for Black to play territorially with 1 and 3 here is somewhat **disappointing**. Black's territory may look healthy, but in fact it's not efficient or secure enough for this plan to rise above mediocrity.



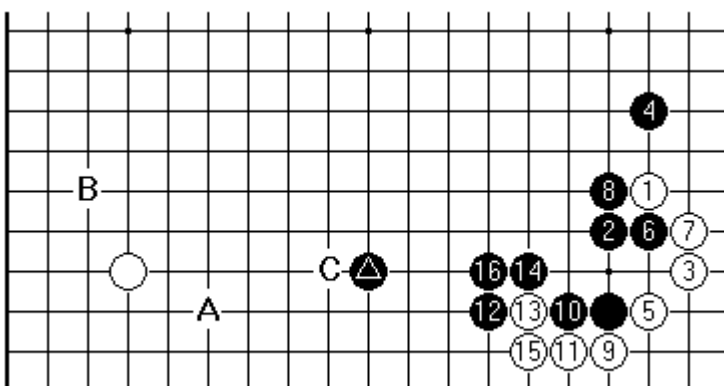
Black **ought** to make better use of the extension stone by playing a tight pincer such as 3. In this case Black develops quickly on both sides, while White is still unsettled.



In a game Takagi-Fujisawa Shuko from the Judan Tournament in 1987, White tried 4. This is an early **challenge**. If White can play this way with impunity in Black's strong area, the game will start to look favourable.

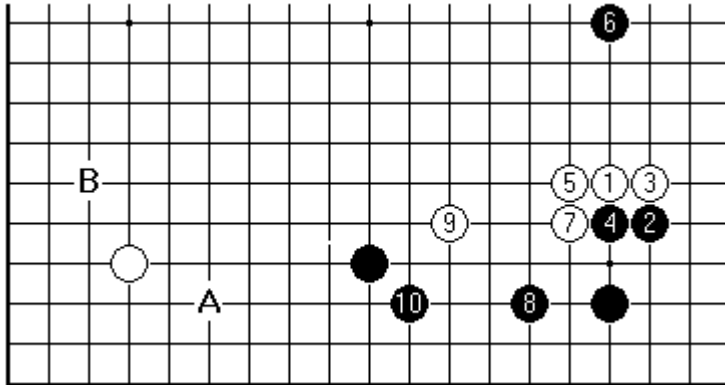


This was the continuation. Next White played D, to run out into the centre with a **second** weak group. However White 6 was criticised (analysis in Abe's *New Moves, New Patterns for 1987*). Instead White should keep Black separated with White A, Black B, White C. This would reduce the liberties on the pair of stones above including 5.

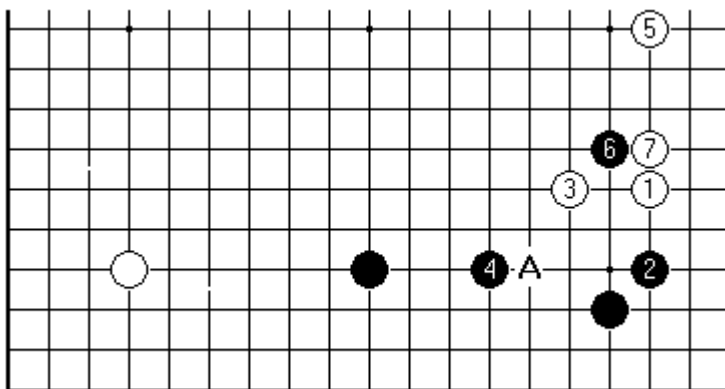


If the right-hand corner is played out according to normal patterns such as have been given in the previous two articles, one can look at whether the **exchange** Black A, White B would be a good one in context. For example here in a game from 1989

Black gives up the corner, gaining much outside and central influence. The lower edge is left open-skirted, and White can later jump in from 15. A general comment therefore applies: Black can be happy not to have exchanged A for B. European Champion Lee Hyuk has said, however, that the marked black stone belongs at C in this sort of position.



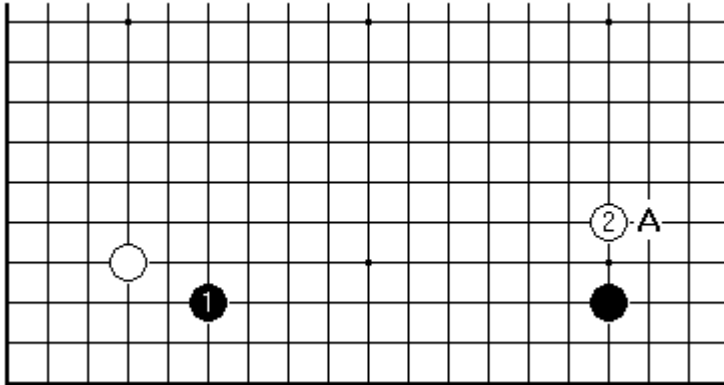
In the Kobayashi-Takemiya Kisei match game from 1989, White approached the lower right at 1, and what followed was a standard line for Takemiya. Next White attacked 6 with the influence built up below. However professional opinion, as represented by the *Go World* commentary, felt that Black had **gained** by omitting the A-B exchange. After Black has 10 in place, it may well suit Black to start at B in the left corner instead.



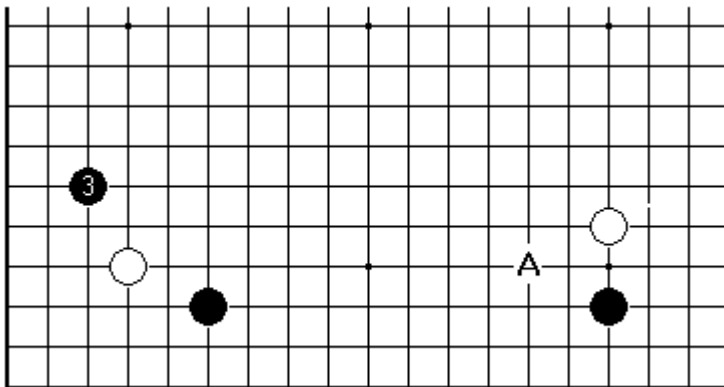
Finally a thought from China's **imaginative** Yu Bin for this position, in 1994. White 3 is an idea that is very tempting in the Kobayashi formation. Here Black would have to be careful about stealing White's base on the side with a play 4 at 5. White at A in answer would threaten to isolate the corner, and also leave a question mark over the original extension stone. Therefore White 3 comes across as a successful piece of opportunism, to exploit the absence of the exchange in the left corner. After 5 it seems clear that White's result has an edge over the comparable positions seen in the previous part.

21. Anti-Kobayashi: Double Approach

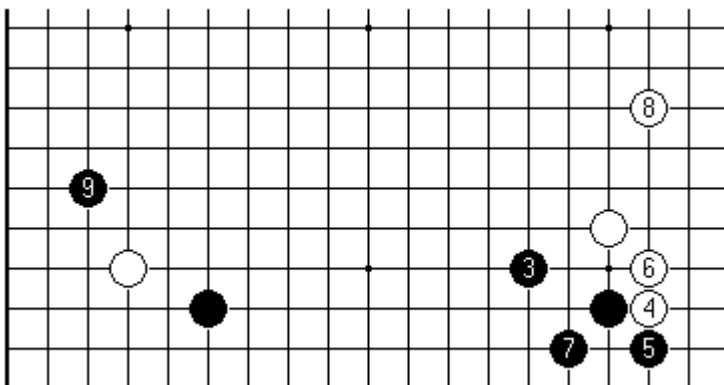
It is quite common for White to react with an **immediate** approach, to prevent Black laying out the Kobayashi formation.



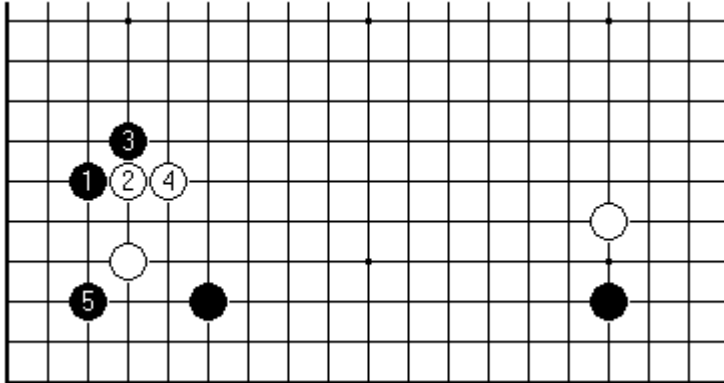
White 2 is the **expected** approach - White at A instead was tried often enough in the past decade, particularly in Korea, without becoming established.



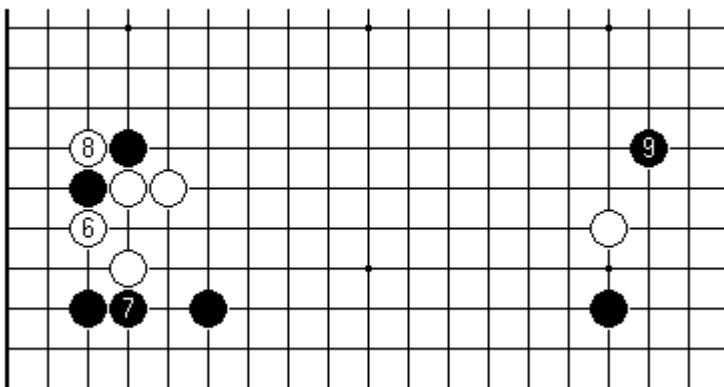
The idea at which we shall look is the **natural** one of Black 3 played as a double approach in the left corner. An advantage of White's fourth line approach in the right-hand corner is that White may have a chance to play later at A. This is a key position for influence, and if White takes possession of it, Black cannot pursue a framework strategy on the lower side.



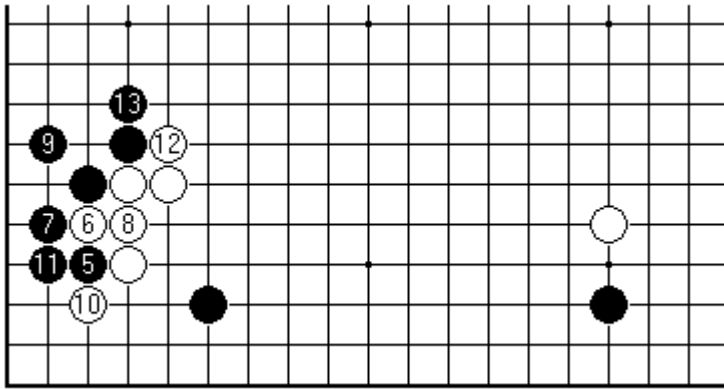
Therefore it is also a possible strategy for Black to play the **calm** knight's move on the right first, as in this game Zhou Heyang-Shao Weigang from last year's Qisheng in China. White plays out the corner to avoid severe attack, and then Black turns to the double approach. The virtue of this plan is going to be seen a little later as Black chooses a variation on the left, a decision we now discuss.



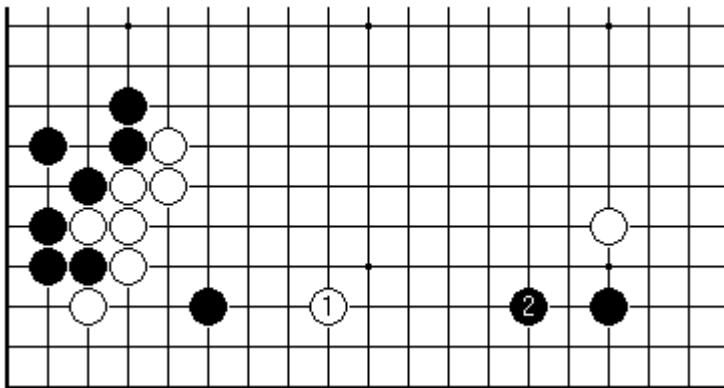
There are around ten variations that have been seen in pro play after the double approach 1; but only three that are **well-attested**, at least in the presence of a white 4-4 stone in the upper left. White has the choice of side on which to play contact with 2. Black 5 is one way in which Black settles the position.



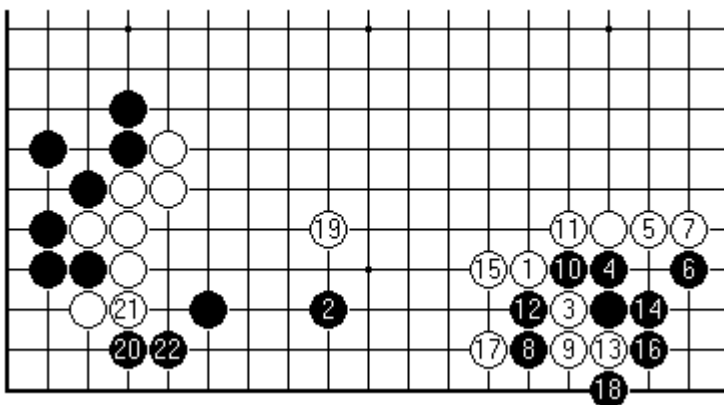
This was the continuation in game 1 of the 1983 Kisei match (Fujisawa Shuko-Cho Chikun), in which this opening was played almost **out of the blue** (in fact it was known earlier in China). The strategic point is that Black opts to become settled in the left-hand corner, rather than to try for development on both sides.



The other popular line for Black, when White plays contact on the left-side stone, is this one. With 5 Black ensures a very **sound** shape, and effectively prevents White from taking corner territory. This position has occurred numerous times in Chinese and Korean games, and we take a look at how White addresses the problem of dealing with the lower side.

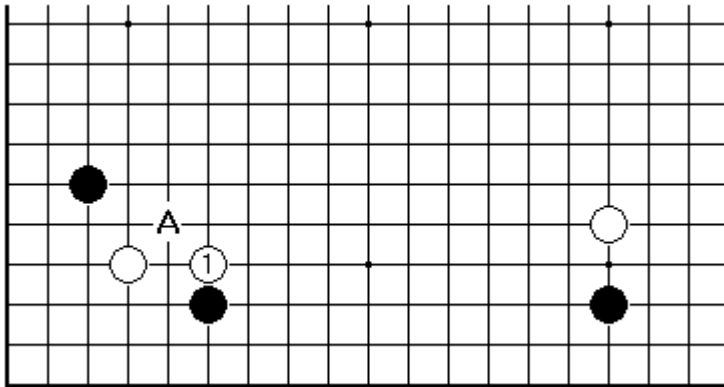


There have been games in which White has played the straightforward pincer 1, and Black has reacted by making the **solid** extension at 2. White hasn't yet taken territory, because Black still has the chance to cut to the left of the isolated stone, or to run it out to the centre.

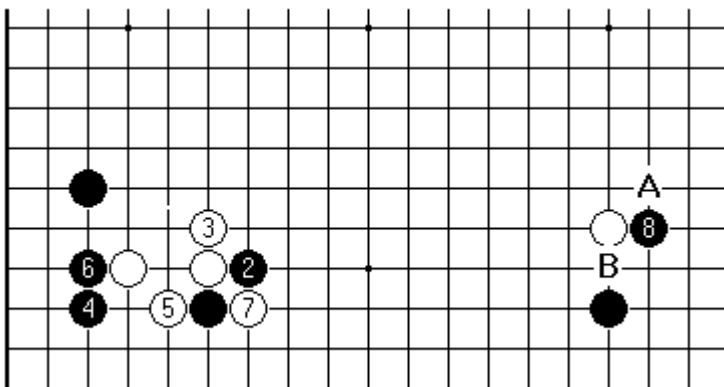


In a game Seo Pong-su - Yi Ch'ang-ho from 1989, White struck first at the **key point** with 1, and Black reacted to settle the stone on the side. White's plan unfolded as the

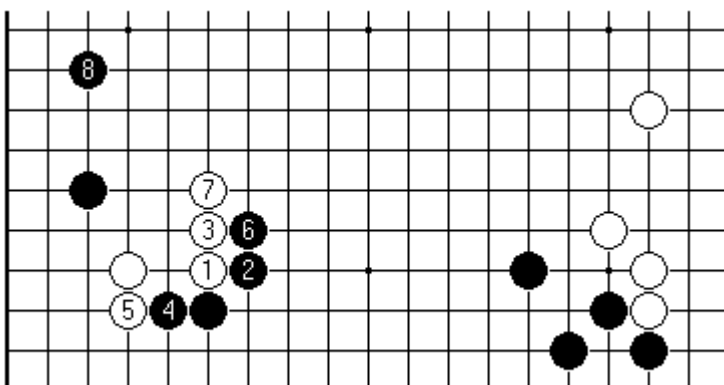
construction of a large-scale framework, next by extending on the right side, leading to a game of raging fights.



White's other **main** option is to play contact on the lower side with 1. The diagonal play at A, which has a reputation as locally somewhat slack, has been seen in recent games.



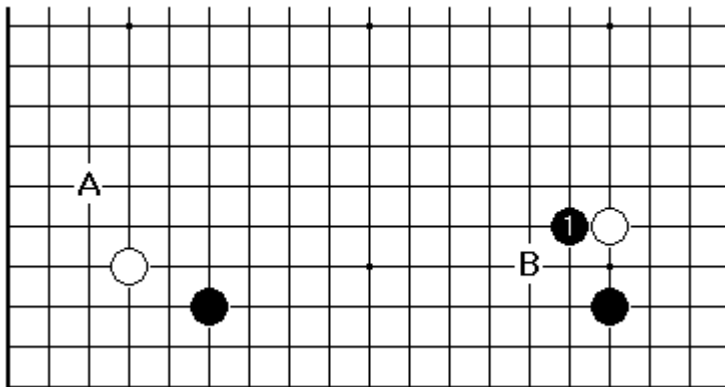
Again it is a **clear-cut** strategy for Black to invade the corner with 4. White 7 creates an influential position, so that Black 8 to stabilise and take the other corner is natural. At this point White at A may seem to be dancing too much to Black's tune, so that White instead may launch into the avalanche opening with B.



Returning to the Zhou-Shao game discussed above, in which Black played out the right corner first, what happened shows a different type of development. With the strong position to the right, Black used 6 and 8 to reinforce on both sides. Overall **judgement** of the result must of course also take into account White's possible gains based on becoming firmly established on the right side.

22. Anti-Kobayashi: Outside Contact

There is another, so far less developed way for Black to respond in the position considered last time. In a fashion that has hardly been seen so far in this series, it speaks to the acquisition of raw **power** early in the opening.



When Black plays 1 as here, the outside contact move, the meaning is quite **different** from contact on the other side of the white stone. The latter is a stand-by of professional Go, is a very steady play, and has been seen often in previous articles. Black 1 has a number of distinctive features:

it bids for side and central influence, rather than corner territory;

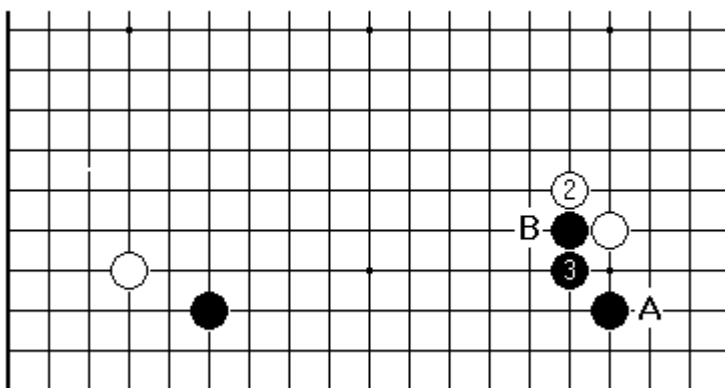
it is more forceful than the play at B, which we have already discussed;

it is hard to imagine White ignoring it.

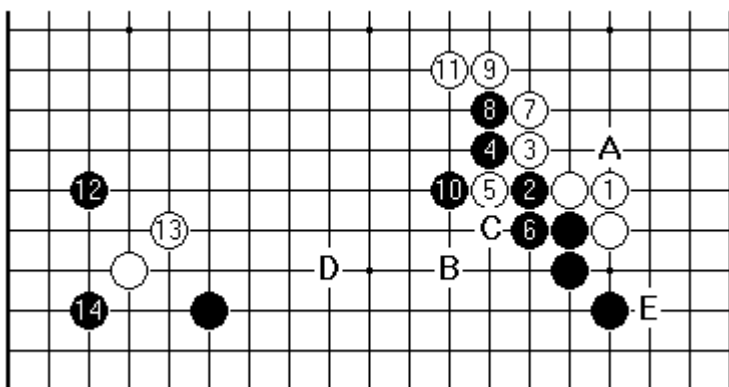
Looking at the strategy Black is **unrolling** for the side as a whole:

Black is postponing the double approach at A, with the hope that shortly the options there will open up (see discussion last time after Black 1 at B);

the framework Black is developing across the lower side has aspirations for central expansion, but it is not yet clear how Black might close it off, so this is an open-ended project quite likely to cause violent fighting.

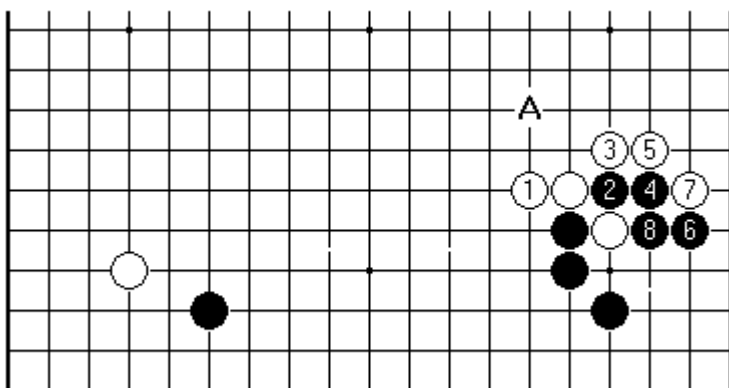


Much therefore depends on the next few plays in the right-hand corner. This is a **fluid** position, but it is in the nature of the set corner openings to bring the planning process down to earth. Here White 2 is the usual play; White also can play at A to try to get settled quickly without worrying so much about conceding influence. Black 3 is normal. This is also seen at B (for example in a game Sonoda-Wang from the 1983 China-Japan exchange series, an early occurrence of this pattern).



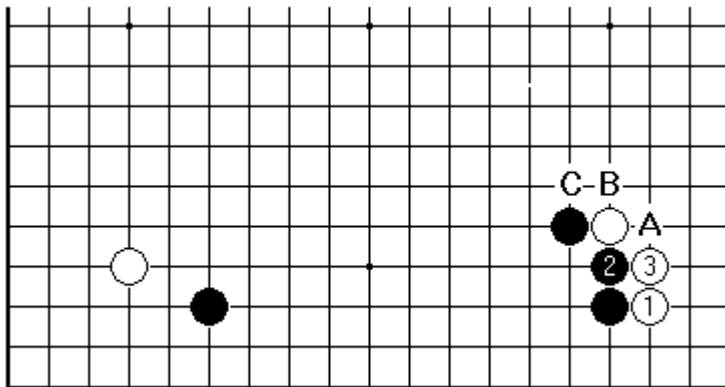
This was the continuation in the game Cho Hun-Hyeon against Takemiya, from the 1992 final of the TV Asia international title. First White 1 (rather than A) is a revision of the book line, and changes the tactics later after White E. With 2 and 4 Black expands at **top speed** into the centre; neither player can back down in the subsequent pushing battle. Having dealt swiftly with the left corner with 13, Takemiya built his own framework on the right side. Later White was able to play B, Black C, White D to enter Black's stronghold, for a close game.

This is a **model** strategy for Black. It seems to be favoured by Laurent Heiser (6 *dan*) of Luxembourg; see his game against Pedrini of Italy from the World Amateur, in the 1995 Ranka Handbook.

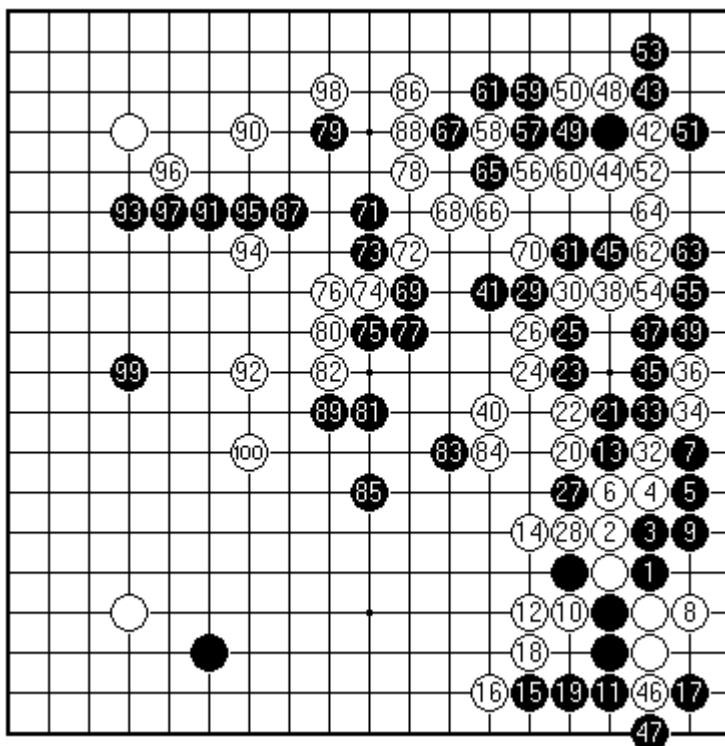


Supposing White **dislikes** losing control of the centre like this, it is possible to extend out with White 1 in this fashion. This was played in the game 'Jimmy' Ch'a Min-su (Black) against He Xiaoren in the 1997 North American Masters. After the sequence shown, White built a framework on the right side. The ladder question did however require attention and a white play shortly at A (a good ladder for White is a precondition for adopting the variation, but that leaves the possibility of a ladder-

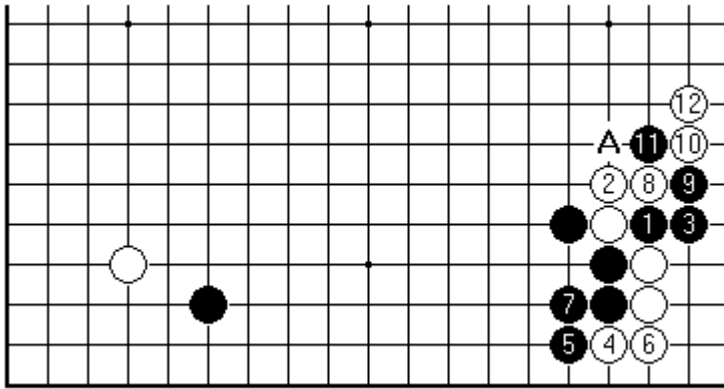
breaker from Black). It therefore looks very much as if Black can expect to exploit the double approach in the left corner.



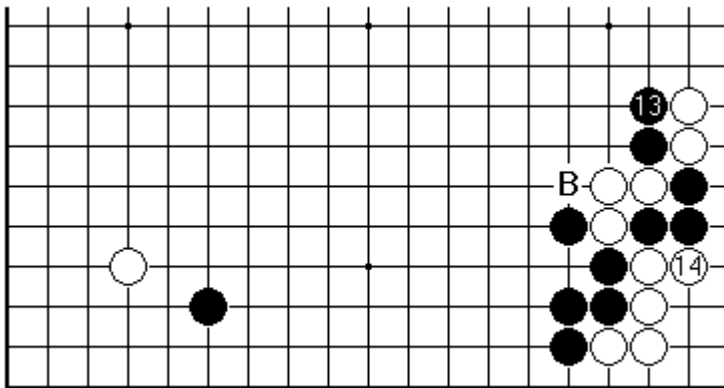
The other way for White to play is to run for cover in the corner with White 1 here, leaving Black to claim influence. In reply Black invariably pushes up with 2, the most **difficult** move. Now after the inevitable White 3 Black at A is the traditional answer. It leads to some scary, not completely explored fighting variations. Black B and C are more modern plays, consistent with the aim of acquiring influence in a controlled manner.



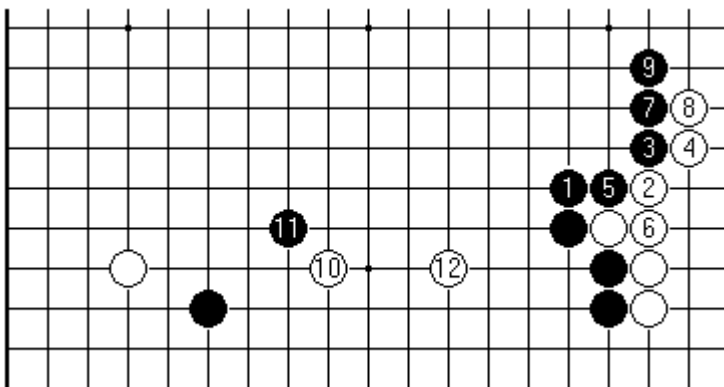
In this game O Rissei-Cho Chikun from the 1990 Kakusei tournament in Japan, Black chose the cut and crawl variation with 1 and 3, an innovation. This led to some all-out fighting to the knife. It is relatively rare to see such **uninhibited** Go at the top level. In the plays given in the diagram here matters have been sorted out to some extent. According to the Kido Yearbook the game is still roughly in balance; a serious mistake shortly by White tipped it Black's way.



For reference, the normally seen continuation of Black 1 and 3 here involves a ladder. After White 10 Black **relies** on a ladder capture of White's cutting stones at A. In the game under examination, though, this ladder is good for White, broken as it is by White's 4-4 stone in the upper left.

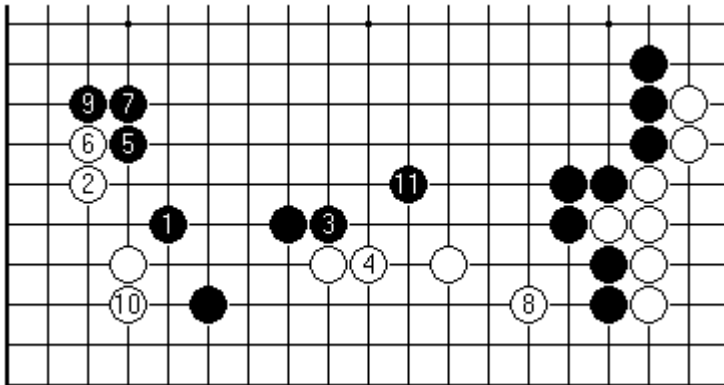


There is also this further, **insidious** ladder. After Black 13 White had better play 14, whereupon Black has a ladder at B. You can check that in the O-Cho game this too is broken by White's stone top left.



Black 1 as played here is an idea of Kajiwara's from around 30 years ago. Since it isn't mentioned in the *Ishida Joseki Dictionary* (English translation of first edition), which still counts as a standard reference for many, it **perversely** qualifies as a 'new' move. (In fact it is now common in pro play.) This line is taken from a Korean 1993

game Hwang Weon-chun (7 *dan* - Ch'oe Kyu-pyeong (6 *dan*), cited in a middlegame book by Yu Ch'ang-hyeok. Black having built substantial influence on the right, but giving up the initiative, White pincers at 10 and the middlegame is swiftly upon us.

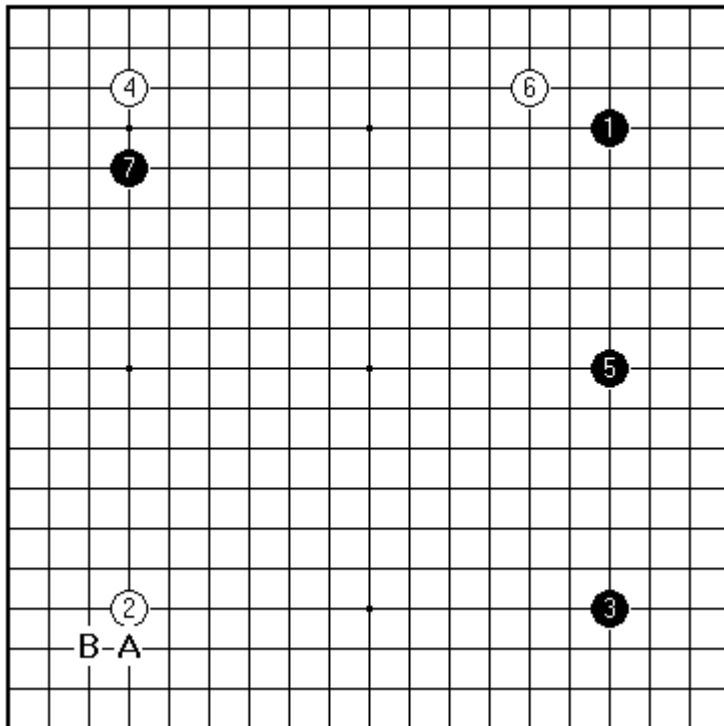


A complete analysis of this position would be very circumstantial (in fact it also occurs in volume 2 of the recently-published Ch'ung Am research archive mentioned earlier in this series, so I'm sure the point doesn't need further emphasis). Here anyway is one **worked-out** line. Black has a problem cutting point in the wall to the right. Time will be saved, at the expense of territory, by treating it as a side-issue. Black's plays here are vigorous and consistent, in the way of building a central framework.

There is clearly considerable **mileage** left in this opening pattern, which is still appearing in games from China.

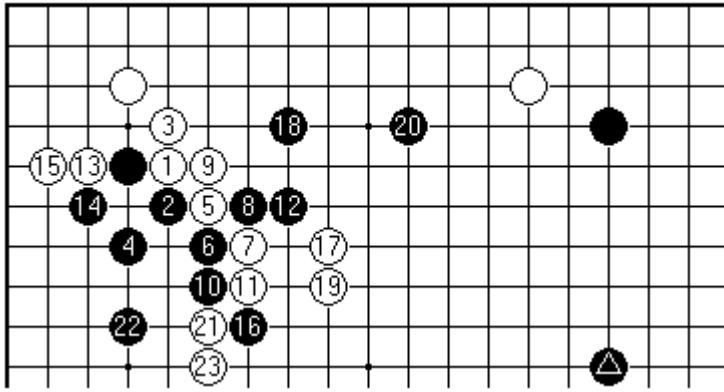
23. Anti-Kobayashi: Extra Star

One of the main branches of the Three Stars (*sanrensei* in Japanese) opening leads to a side position that is a **variant** on the Anti-Kobayashi pattern that has been under study.

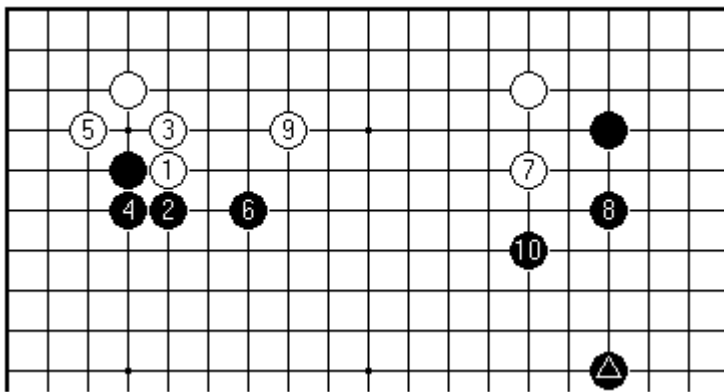


This position has been reached often in professional play. The top side is the same as in the two previous articles in the series, with the superficial change of the reverse of colours, and the addition of the stone 5 at the star point on the side. This extra stone doesn't directly **obstruct** any of the normal plans for White, but must be taken into account in evaluating them.

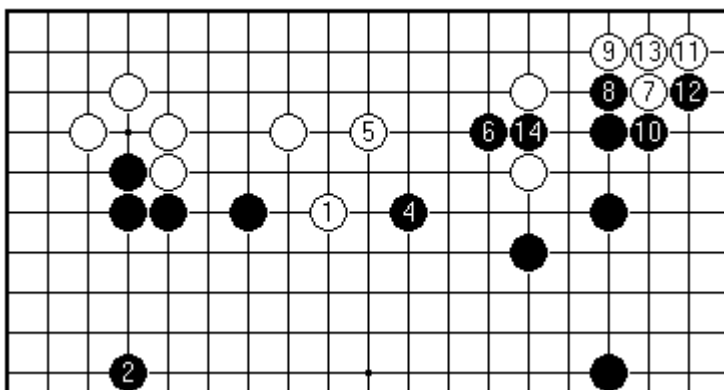
The same formation at the top is also seen with the white stone lower left at A or B. If White is found facing the Three Stars with a position based on a 4-3 point, it is almost certain to belong to this family. Black **rarely** plays the Three Stars against a 3-4 point, the other orientation, the reasons being quite similar to those underlying the Anti-Chinese.



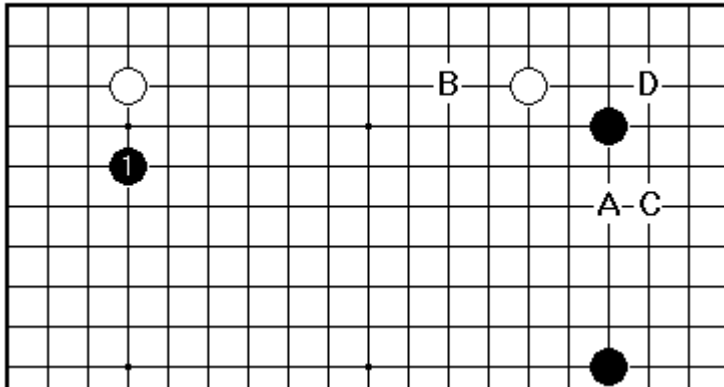
This example is from Rin Kaiho-Ryu Shikun in the 1998 Meijin League. Central to pro thinking about Go in general is that a stone like the marked black one must not lie **idle** awaiting developments. Black must actively seek to create positions in which it is clearly well placed. In this case Black varies with 12 from the peaceable variation seen before after White's outside contact play 1. Black must suffer some loss on the left side, but the general aim is to have the centre swarming early with weak groups.



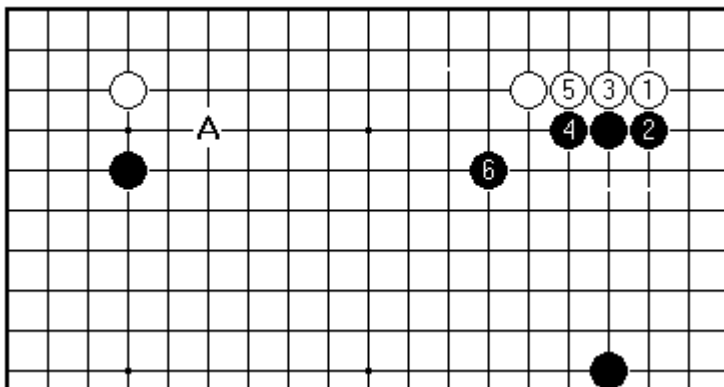
As played by Takemiya, the modern **master** of the Three Stars, the meaning of Black's marked stone can be read quite differently. Black develops into the centre on firm foundations, apparently without concern about White's framework on the top side. This is from Takemiya Masaki-Awaji Shuzo in the 1988 Oza final, game 2.



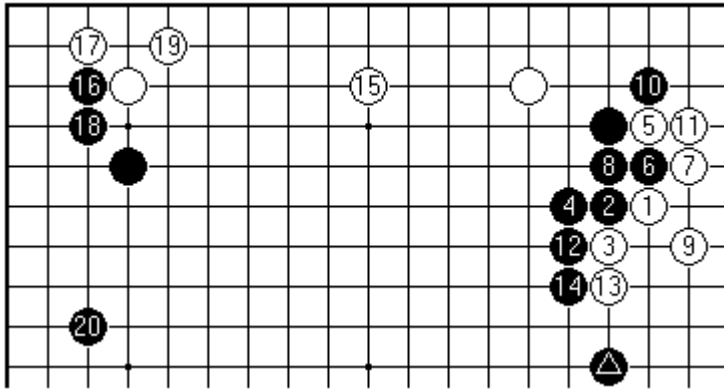
In what followed White played 3 on the lower side of the board. Black created great influence with 14, but gave up the initiative once more to do so. Black won this game by killing a white group on the right side, a **fighting** justification of his strategy.



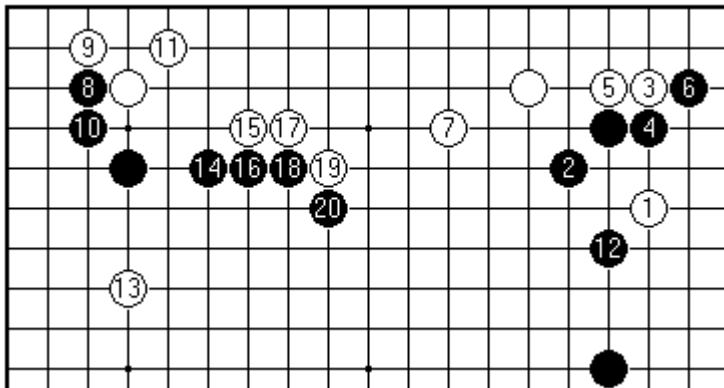
Looking more closely at Black 1 here, it fits with Takemiya's conception of Go (the **famous** 'cosmic' style, though he himself calls it 'natural'). In fact it seems as if this approach play, ignoring for a moment the top right, may have been an invention of Kato Masao; it occurs in a game of his against Ohira in the 1973 Nihon Ki-in Championship. Black's normal plays in the top right would be at A or B. White can continue in the top right with the double approach C or the invasion D.



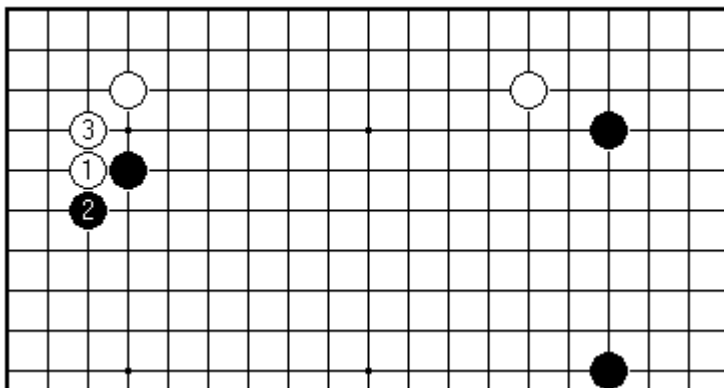
This occurred in Takemiya's game against Sakakibara Shoji from the Gosei tournament in 1984. Shortly Black took the point A, and the stage was set for Black to colonise the centre. In cosmic Go certain **concessions** such as Black 2 are made - earning the epithet 'slack' - but the real test of the plan comes later as the central framework is poked, punched and punctured in the fighting.



One article of faith for the followers of cosmic Go is that Black has **no reason** to fear the double approach 1 here, in the Three Stars context. This seems to be so generally accepted, that examples are thin on the ground. This is from Cheong Su-hyeon 7 *dan* versus Paek Seong-ho 8 *dan* in the Korean Wangwi League from 1992. This time Black's marked stone ends up on a key point for shape.

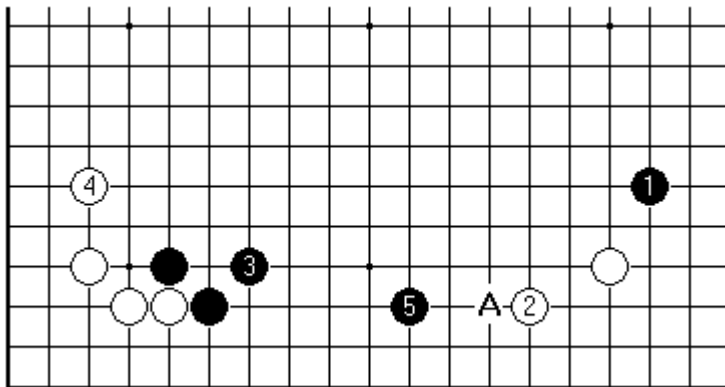


This Chinese game from 1988 shows the diagonal answer Black 2, normally considered one of the **hallmarks** of the cosmic style - but, as the true believers explain, these matters cannot be boiled down to a routine.

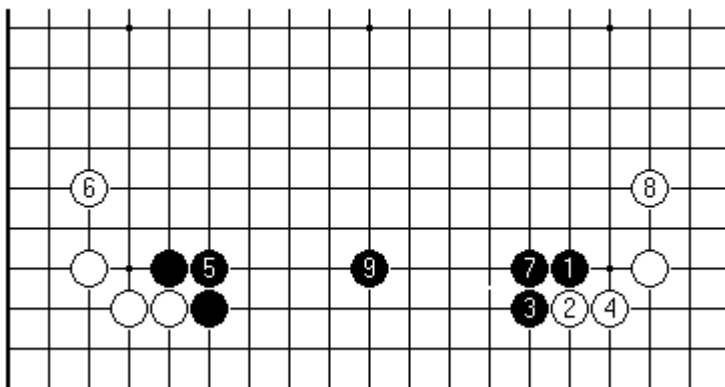


All in all, White's inside contact play 1 here is a **good** choice in this position. White tries to settle in one place, first of all. Black's wish to sweep the game forward into early combats will be resisted. Black could in fact commit to the avalanche opening,

instead of playing 2 as here, to stoke up the fighting, as in the Kato-Ohira game mentioned before.



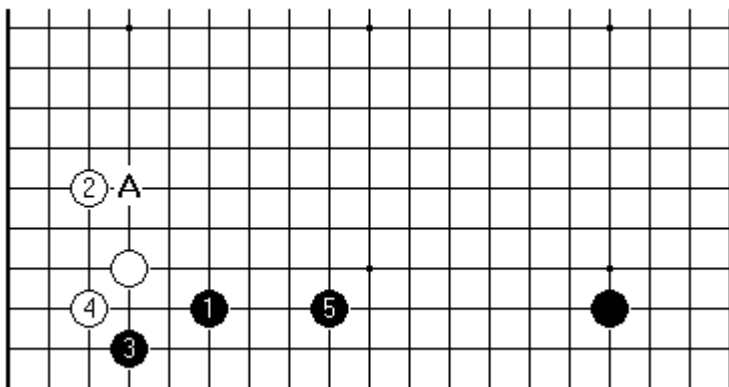
Another way for Black to keep up **momentum** is to leave the upper left for a minute. This diagram representing the left side of the board, Black can transfer to the lower left corner with the approach 1. Now fighting may well break out if White refuses to be pushed around; but assuming White 2, Black can return to 3 and 5. From the point of view of invading Black's formation later, White 2 ought to be at A. This is certainly a dynamic plan for Black, and one that involves only ordinary plays.



Assuming a white stone at 4-3 in the lower left instead, this is a **classic** sequence. This has actually occurred from our starting position (a Korean game Kim Il-hwan against Pak Yeong-ch'an from 1992, which White won); it is much better known in the Two Stars opening. White's strong stones 6 and 8 restrict the expansion of Black's framework.

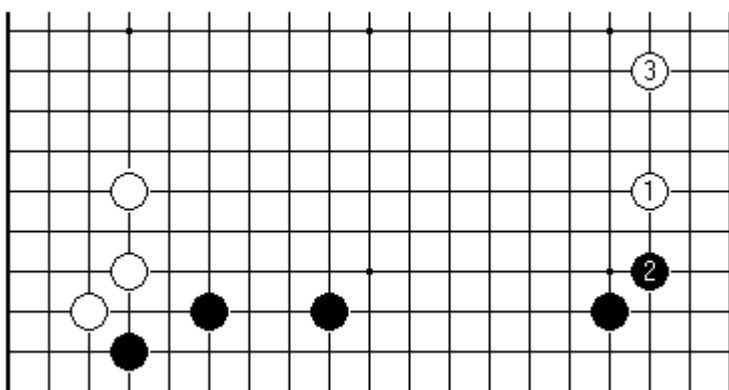
24. Iwata's Formation

There is one more **typical** side to add to those associated with the Chinese style. It is a sort of cross between the Kobayashi and Shimamura formations considered earlier in this series.

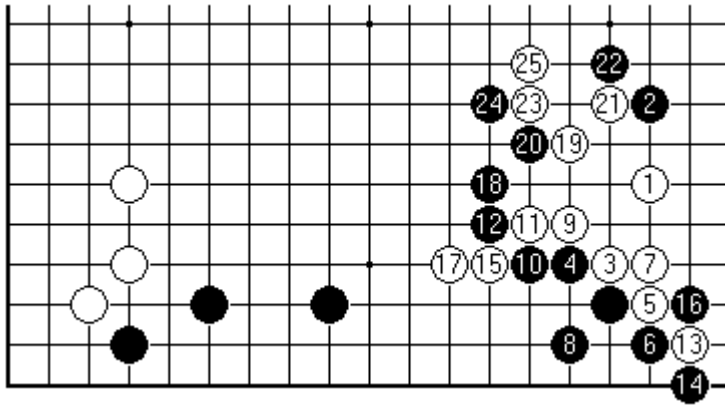


This combination from Black, where White 2 may also be at A, we shall name for Iwata Tatsuaki 9 *dan*, a Kitani disciple from Nagoya, who played it in 1982. It was known before that for White. Black's three stones on the third line pose a problem for the opponent to find a good play in the whole right-hand area. Correspondingly, though, Black has to watch out for balance, **avoiding** a low position.

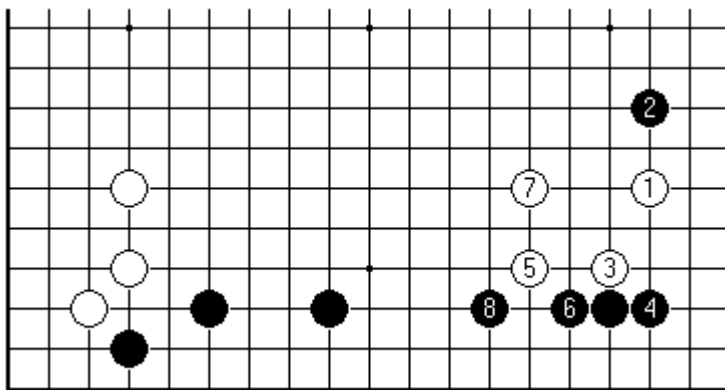
A comment on nomenclature. Attributing patterns to Japanese players is convenient, but may not meet with general approval. Going back 20 years the **focus** of Go was very much on the Japanese professional scene. No other arena at that time had a large group of players of 9 *dan* level, competing in well-documented events. Nowadays matters are different. In fact this formation was known in China in 1982 also (and earlier).



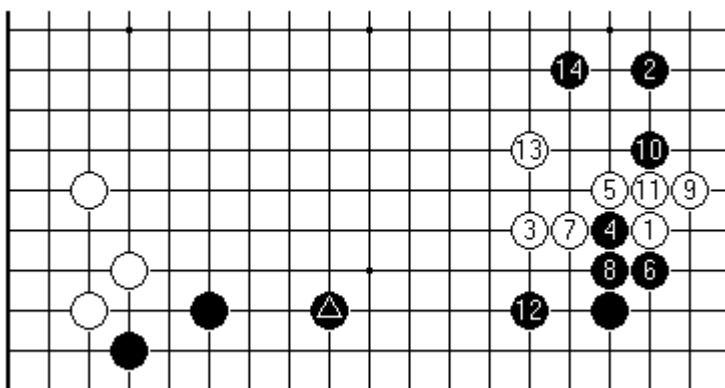
One way for White to treat this position is to play the **distant** approach 1, in line with the Kobayashi formation. This happened in Rin Kaiho-Sakata from the Meijin League in 1983, leading to a tight game. White later invaded the lower side, but Black's groups on both sides are solid. This is in contrast with the Kobayashi formation, where a porous group on the left implies that defending the lower side is urgent.



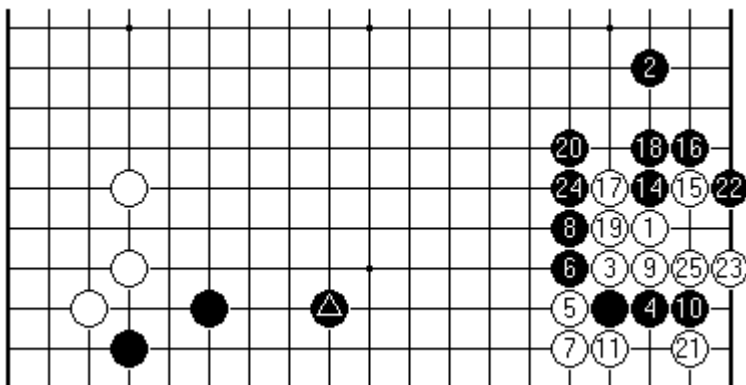
If Black plays a pincer such as 1 in this position, it is with the aim of building a **well-balanced** formation across the side. White 3 is an interesting way to resist. Black 4 avoids being pressed too low. However after 12, natural as it may be, Black is suffering from a lack of liberties; and plays 16 to relieve the pressure. An early fight ensues. The interest of this opening (Konishi Kazuko 5 *dan* against Nakazawa Ayako 4 *dan*, from the 1996 Women's Kakusei) lies in the tension created by the mere presence of Black's strong group to the left.



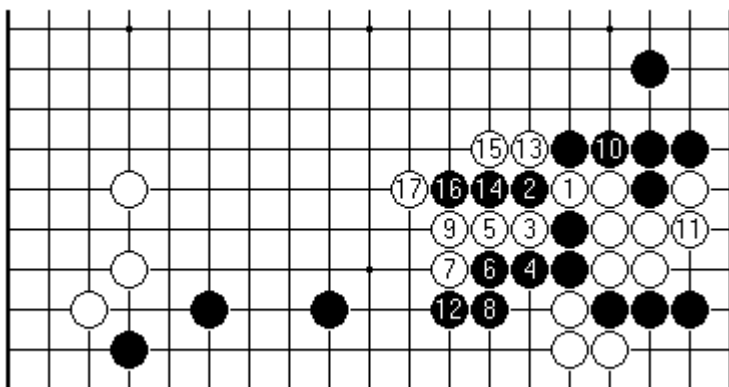
For comparison, this is the sort of result Black must **avoid**. The sequence up to 8 is standard, considered on its own; but is a major transgression against good balance if you look at all those black stones on the third line.



Michael Redmond **relied** on the Iwata formation when taking Black in the 1996 North American Masters, with 100% success. Here against Yang Yilun he played the three-point pincer Black 2 when White approached low. In the resulting position the marked black stone is working properly, because the white group to the right is still subject to attack.

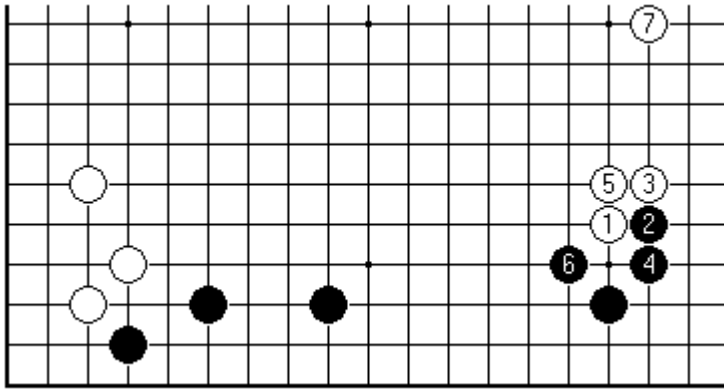


In his game against Huang Liping White played 3, aiming for immediate life in the corner with a play next at 4. Redmond opted for the **complex** variation at 4. Black 12 was played as a ladder-breaker in the upper left, and White 13 replied there (see next diagram). In the end Black built considerable influence, in *sente*, while White took the corner. Here the marked black stone and White's stones 5 and 7 pretty well cancel each other out.

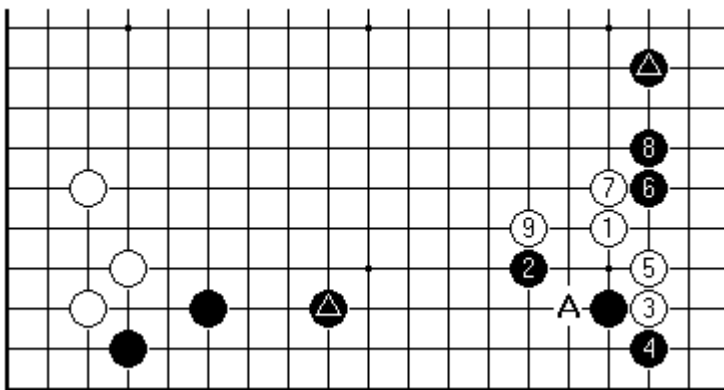


The ladder in question is well **masked**. White's resistance to Black's fencing play at 20 in the previous diagram would start with 1, 3 and 5 here. White is playing with fire, as far as lack of liberties is concerned. After White returns to 11 (a black play here would now connect along the edge while squeezing White), Black rescues the cutting stones with 12. At this point everything turns on the ladder with 13, 15 and 17 (Ishida Joseki Dictionary, 1996 edition). By the way, can you read what happens if 12 is at 13?

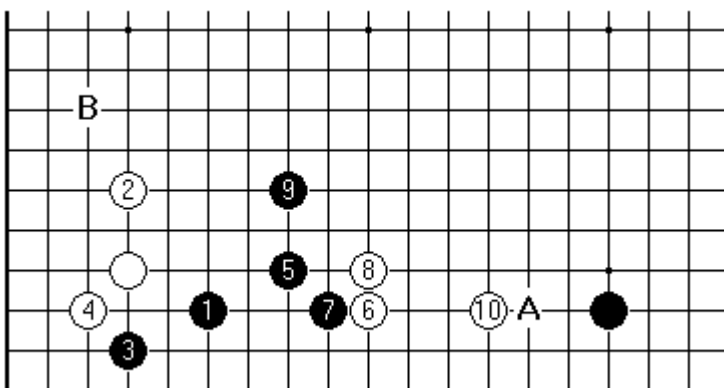
Redmond, a Nihon Ki-in professional who recently became 9 *dan*, has an orthodox, even **sober** style. Perhaps the unspectacular qualities of the Iwata formation appeal to him.



To conclude, a look at the balance issue once more. If White approaches high with 1 here, Black 2 to 6 are a simple way to play, and retain the **initiative**. Black 6 makes it easier for White to invade on the lower side; but with a solid position to the left Black isn't so concerned about this area.



Normally the reply Black 2 to the approach White 1 would be good balance but too easy-going. However assuming the Chinese enclosure to the right is already in place, it leads into an interesting idea. Playing Black 6 leaves behind some weaknesses (for example at A), but it is hard for White to do other than move out with 7 and 9. In this position **both** marked black stones are working flat out. One can question whether White should actually play out the lower left before approaching the lower right.

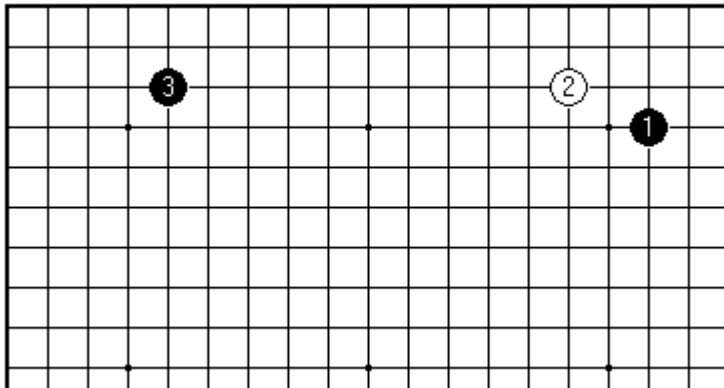


When White plays 2 on the fourth line, as here, it may occur to Black to try 5. This gives White a chance to **challenge** immediately with 6, gaining a base with 10 (or A). Black's idea is that B will become a good play shortly, putting the central play 9 to work. Just at the moment Black is likely to attend to the right-hand corner.

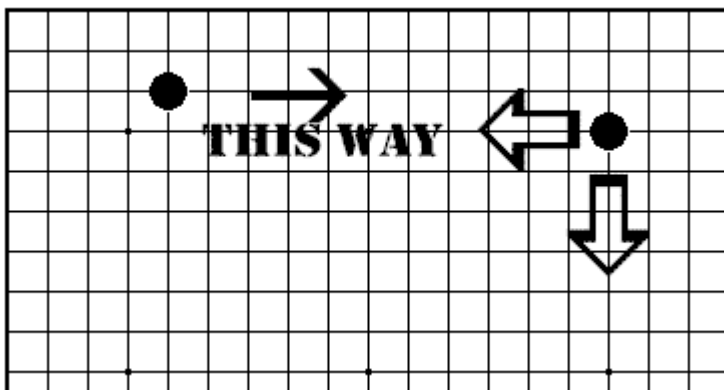
With this pattern we finish what has been a fairly thorough survey of formations from **contemporary** Go that stem in one way or another from the introduction of the Chinese style .

25. Empty Corner and 5-3

In the old days many games **started** like this:

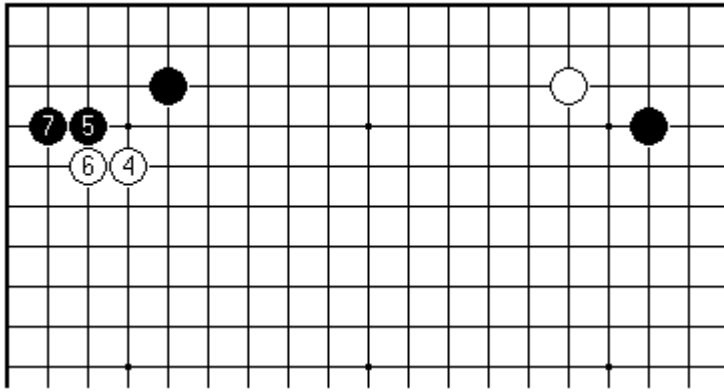


What is going on here? In those times there was no *komi* to compensate White for playing second. The immediate approach 2 is one way to complicate the game into something more **tense** than a share-out of territory. But Black 3 on a 5-3 point has a special, explicable meaning.

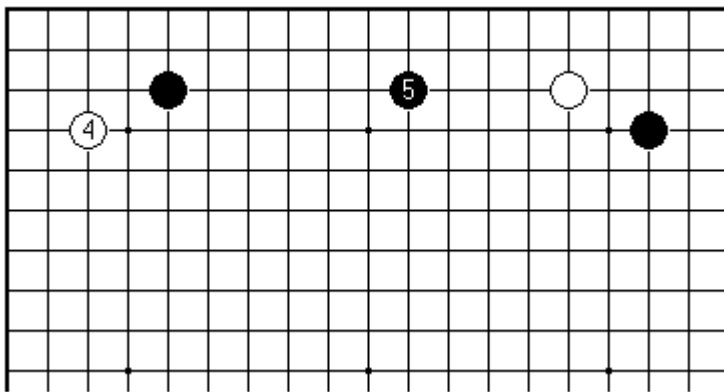


A 5-3 point exerts influence, to be sure. As used by Go players, the term 'influence' is so broad as to be in danger of meaning just about any effect that isn't purely to do with secure territory. There is a difference if we compare with a 4-4 point, which also of course is a play for influence. As suggested by the diagram, the 5-3 point comes with a **preferred direction**, along the side, while the 4-4 point acts equally in two directions.

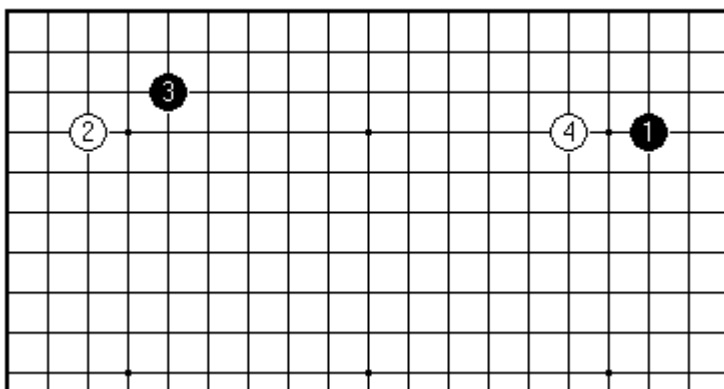
There is also a difference in quality, when it comes to fighting. The 4-4 point works best when the opponent builds a weak group at about the distance suggested by the points of the arrows. The 5-3 point prepares for all-out fighting **anywhere** along the side - its position on the third line means it isn't quickly undermined, as a fourth line position may easily be.



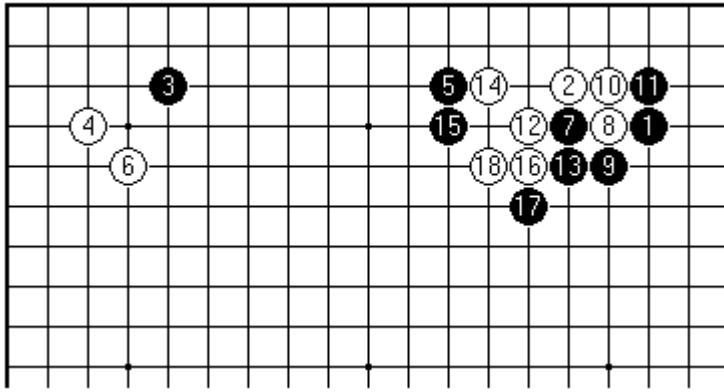
In classical Go of the Edo period in Japan, White most often approached at 4, allowing Black to take territory with 5. There is a **story** behind this play.



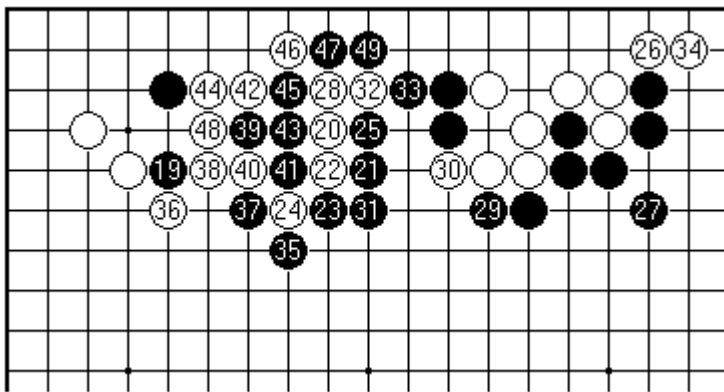
The assumption was that if White approaches in the more conventional way with 4, Black 5 is an ideal combination of pincer on the white stone to the right, and extension from the black stone to the left. This teaching was believed to the extent of creating a **taboo**. And in fact it is still held to be an important insight.



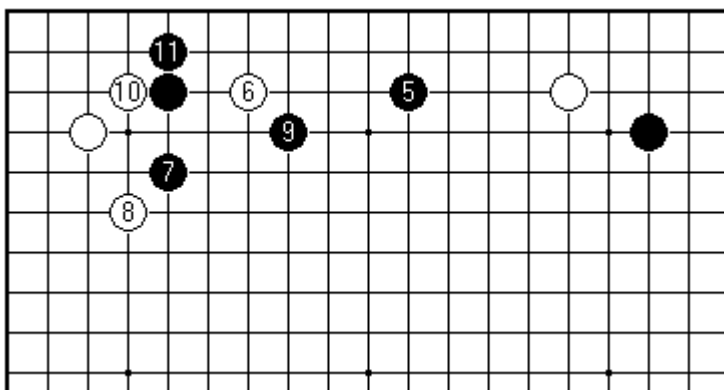
For example, if Black and White play 3-4 points in this way with 1 and 2, the side is likely to be played out almost instantly (because first play here is urgent, in other words this is a 'hot' area); and after Black 3 White normally **avoids** symmetry by choosing 4 rather than the approach on the third line.



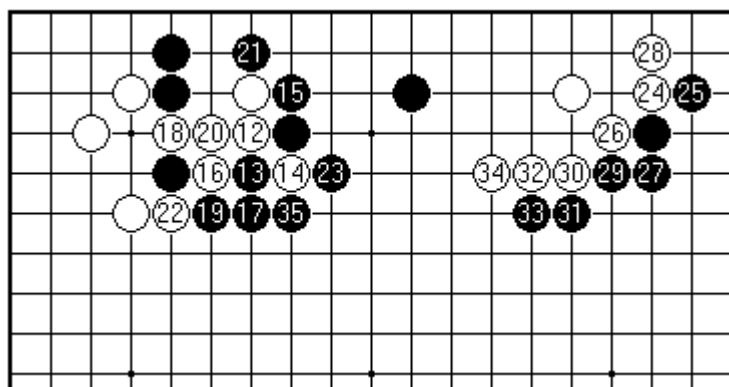
What has been said so far is conventional doctrine, supporting the play Black 3 as a logical plan (though it is far from the only one). Since this follows on from material in Chapter 9 of my *Teach Yourself Go*, I was interested to find a number of examples where the underlying symmetric pattern was **tested** in professional play, nearly all in games of Kitani Minoru. Here in 1926 (aged 17 and 2 *dan*) he had Black against the highly aggressive Shinohara 'Heavy Tank' Misami 3 *dan*.



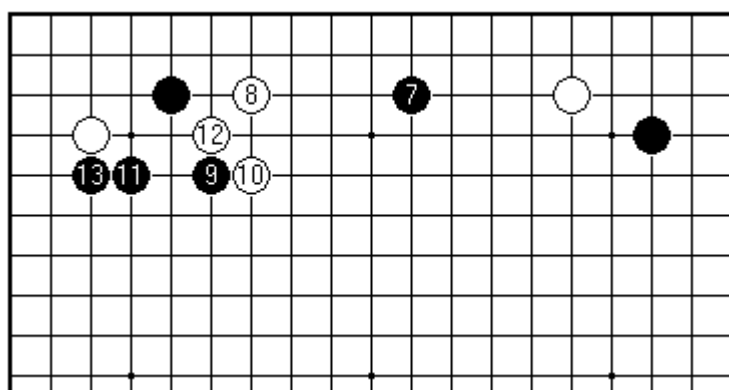
In what followed White invaded Black's framework, but changed horses in midstream, setting up instead one of those **trades** beloved of professionals. The point to notice is that Black's influence in this game underwent a transformation, ending up pointing south where it started pointing due east. Nothing could be more characteristic of fighting.



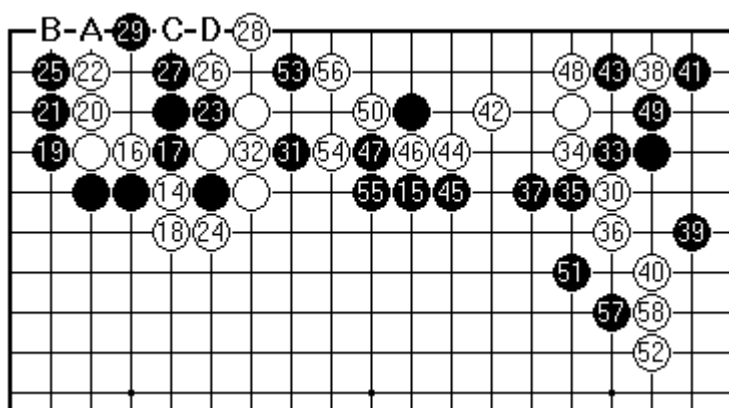
A year later Kitani tried this strategy **himself** when taking White against the higher-ranked Hayashi Yutaro. Up to 11 it looks like White is playing for a quick fix here.



The end result is **comparable** to the previous game, in general terms, if reached by a quite different route. Black 35 is professional play, dismantling the ladder before it causes complications.

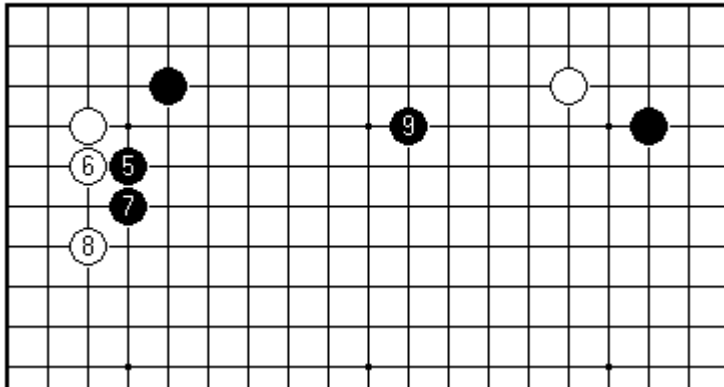


In 1931 the **imaginative** Kubomatsu Katsukiyo played this pattern on Go Seigen (Black), after a couple of plays that occupied the lower corners first. Black dodges away from White with 9, 11 and 13.

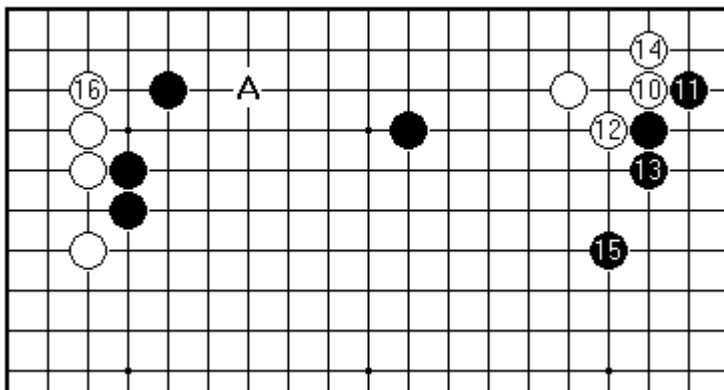


For a while the whole side becomes a fighting area. Assessment of the end position is complicated by the **sinister** ko left behind (White A, Black B, White C, Black D),

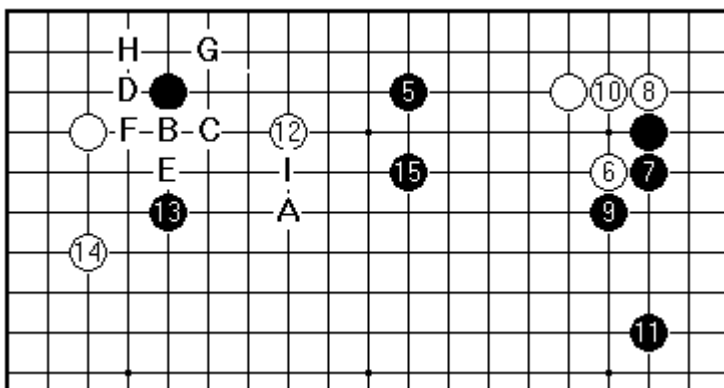
meaning also that Black 53 was far from a waste of time. (If White starts and loses the *ko*, the stones 53 and 31 will cut White, as you should check.)



In 1941 Kitani tried this plan **again** in the Oteai, on Sekiyama Riichi (Black), who later in the year became the first victor in a Honinbo title match. Black 5 and 9 show another option for putting the 5-3 point to work: first press and only then play the pincer-cum-extension. At the time Black 9 was an unexplored play.



White's approach is sober enough, reflecting the older, deep-thinking Kitani. White 16 is a slow play at a **key** point, setting up an invasion at A (which happened as soon as Black took an empty corner). Black won the game by a small margin.



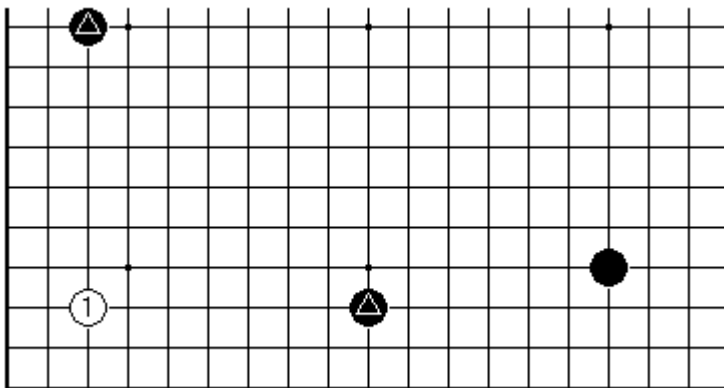
Kitani, nothing if not a **stubborn** individualist, returned once more to play the same way against Segoe Kensaku in 1945 (both players then 8 *dan*). With the formation later fixed by the sequence Black A, White B through to Black I, Kitani was giving rein to his acquired taste for territory; losing however this game too, by resignation.

One can therefore say that the merits or otherwise of symmetrical play by White in the initial position were **tested** by top players in the second quarter of the twentieth century. As far as I can tell the taboo hasn't been that much dented, making Black 3 of the initial diagram still quite an effective answer to White 2.

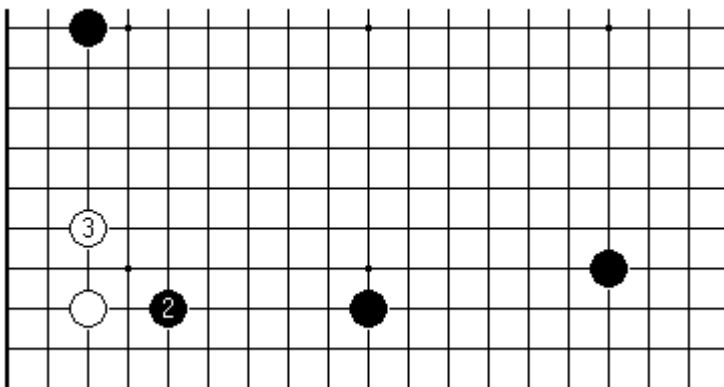
26. Empty Corner and 3-3

In this article I'll introduce the 3-3 point. And then with 4-4, 3-4, 3-3 and 5-3 points covered, the vast **majority** of corner opening plays seen in modern Go will be accounted for.

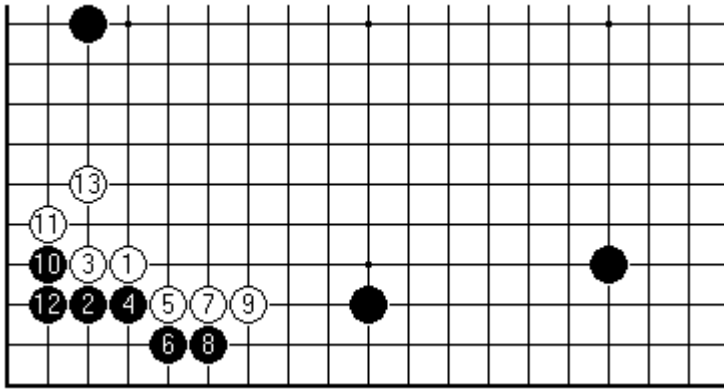
I was talking last time about a taboo from classical Go, and the considered choice of plays in an empty corner. In the eyes of the classical masters there was a **ban** on playing the 3-3 point corner opening at all. To begin with, I want to explain why that prohibition was too sweeping, according to current notions, in particular for empty corner occupation.



The nature of the 3-3 point can be understood through this schematic example. Supposing White needs to play in the lower left corner, when the two marked black stones are already in place. Then White 1 is **ideal**.

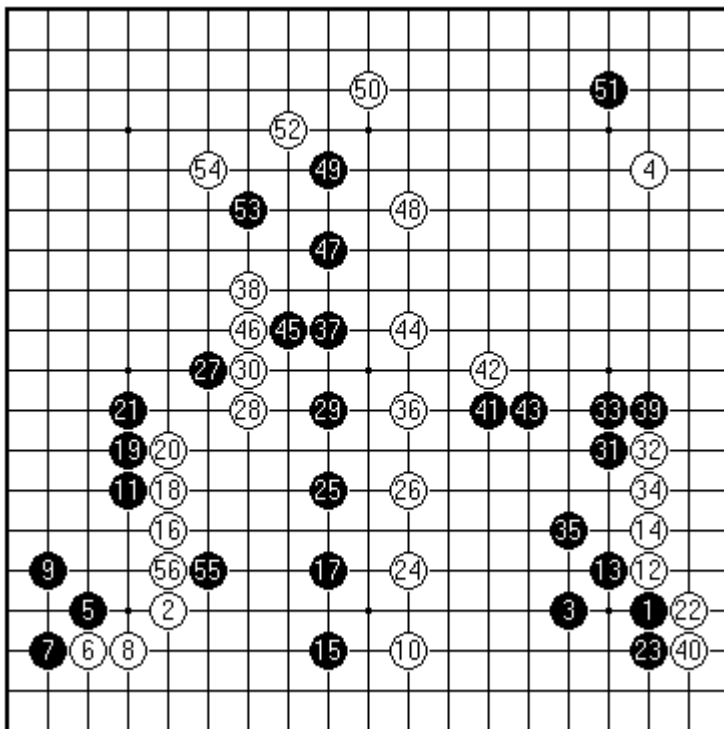


The reason is that White's **life** in the corner will not be threatened. After Black 2, White 3 is simple and good. You can say that the points 2 and 3 are *miai*. In any case White is quite comfortable here.

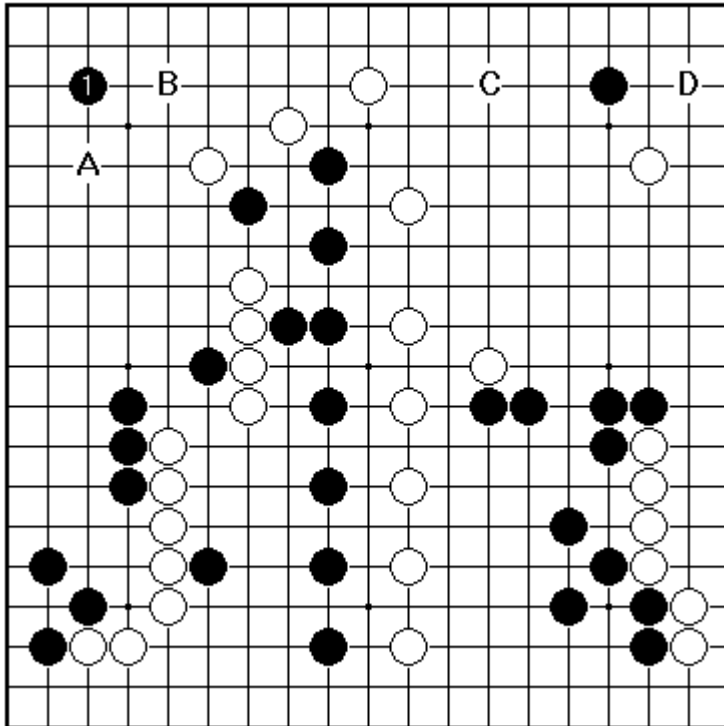


In contrast, White 1 at the 4-4 point isn't a good idea. If Black immediately invades at the 4-4 point, the standard sequence leaves White short of a **plan** for further development. In fact Black's stones on the sides occupy two points that can be considered *miai*; since Black has both, it is hard for White to get a good result.

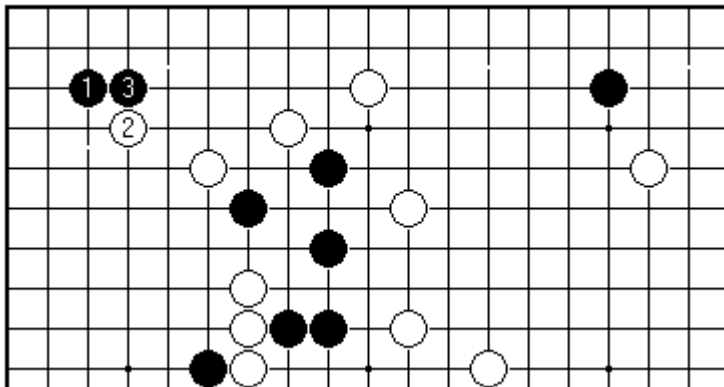
These examples are artificial, though they convey a **correct** way of thinking. Here's an early use of the 3-3 point in a related context.



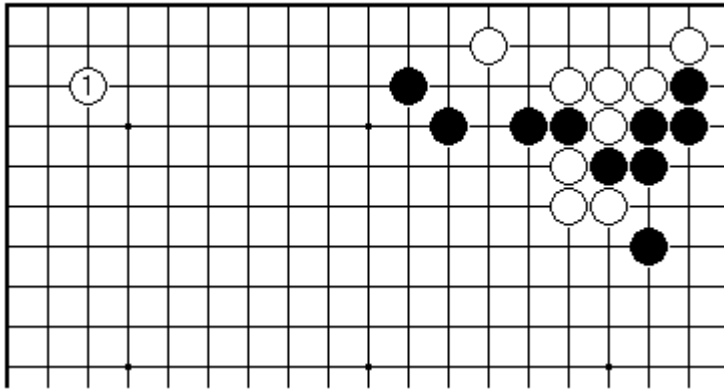
This is from a game played in 1891 between Osawa Ginjiro 4 *dan*, one of the few 'southpaw' Go players (being left-handed he started in the top left, from his point of view, the bottom right as we look at it), and Tamura Hoju 2 *dan* (White), the future Honinbo Shusai. White 10 on the lower side **exceeds** the conventional length of extension at 15 by such a margin that Black invades almost immediately. In the subsequent running fight neither player finds time to occupy the top left corner.



Black's next play was at 1 in the upper left corner. In this position the virtues of the *miai* points A and B for Black are fairly clear. White B, Black A is unambitious for White, while White A, Black B leaves White with serious weaknesses. If we look instead at the top right corner, the points C and D also are like *miai* for Black, but White might be able to develop a more **effective** attack here.

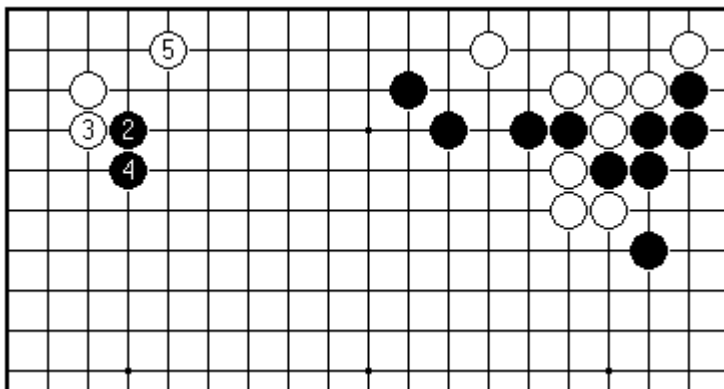


It seems that the traditional **dislike** of the 3-3 opening was because of the shoulderhit reply at the 4-4 point, as with White 2 here. In this case White 2 is a pointless play and Black 3 a quite adequate answer.

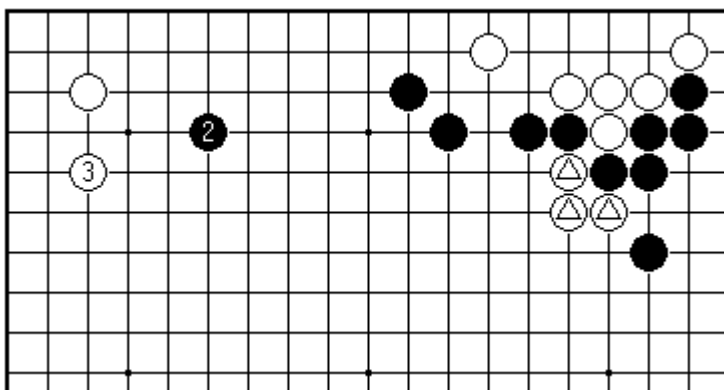


Reaching back into Japan of the nineteenth century, here is a position that might have arisen in the celebrated sequence of **victories** of Shusaku of the Honinbo house, in the 'Castle' or official games commissioned by the shoguns. In this game Shusaku-Yasui from 1851 the first 19 plays were all in the top right corner, following an opening pattern that is still current today.

Playing next at the 3-3 point upper left is a **suggestion** by Sanno (commentary in *Invincible: The Games of Shusaku*).

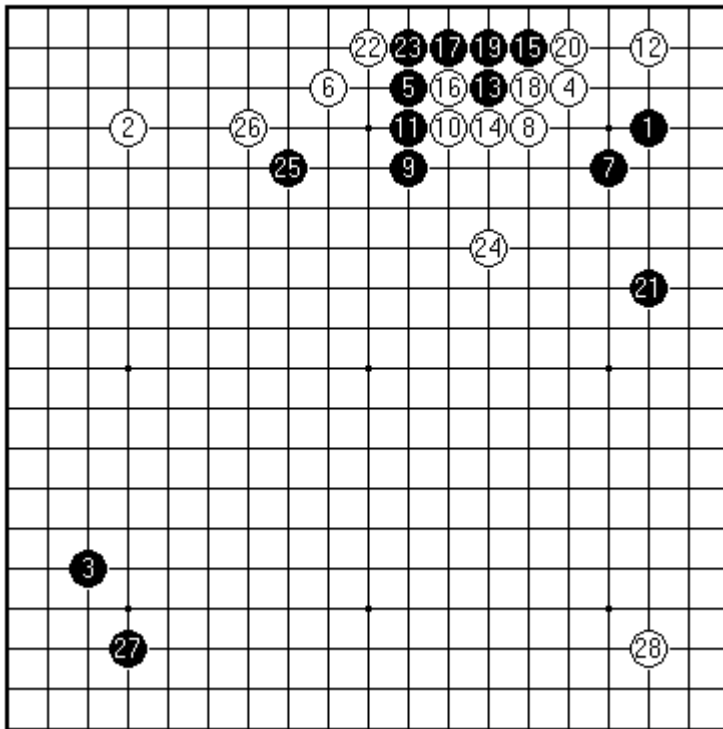


In this case too the shoulderhit Black 2 is out of focus. White 5 is well placed to **stop** Black using the stones on the top side in combination.



The more modern approach of Black 2 allows White quick life with 3. Very soon the fate of the three marked white stones will be in question; the value to White of dealing **rapidly** with the corner shouldn't be underestimated.

In the real game Yasui played a different way (at the 4-5 point), and consequently didn't retain **control** of the corner. Well, modern Go has been the subject of intensive research, though hardly exhaustive. In the case of the 3-3 point new chapters of technique have been opened up, starting rather tentatively in the 1930s, and fashionably in the Sakata ascendancy of the early 1960s.



It is not however true to say that the 3-3 point was **unknown** in classical Go. Here is another of Shusaku's games, from 1844; in it as White he occupies the lower right corner at 3-3. The thinking seems in a way quite modern, with White 4 at 4-4 too. Both 4-4 and 3-3 plays favour rapid development, the second plays in the corners being less urgent. (Black was Sanai Tokujiro, also of the Honinbo house, and a travelling companion of Shusaku; this may well have been an exhibition game.)

In a diagonal pattern (Black 1 and 3 in opposite corners) each side is typically divided between the players. Four shared sides, rather than two if Black 1 and 3 are along one side of the board, can make for **sudden** complexity. The 3-3 point is often used in contemporary Go by White to stake out one corner quickly. The assumption is that fighting elsewhere will be quite enough to occupy White's attention.